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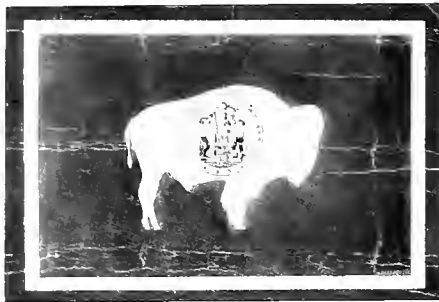
Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

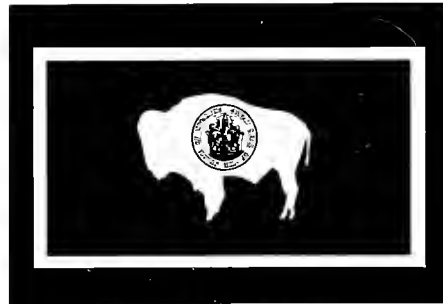
Winter 1999

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Keays' original design



Flag as it appears today

About the Cover Art

"Winning Design, D. A. R. Contest to Design the Wyoming State Flag"

Verna Keays, then a young art school student, submitted the design, pictured on the cover, in the contest sponsored by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1916. Keays' design was chosen over 37 other entries and, in 1917, it became the official flag of the State of Wyoming. Except for the change in the buffalo direction (made unilaterally by the indomitable Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard), the flag of today retains the same colors and design elements as Keays envisioned it in 1916. The original drawing is part of the collections of the Wyoming State Museum, Division of Cultural Resources, Department of Commerce, and is reproduced here by permission. (The agency's name officially becomes the Department of Parks and Cultural Resources later this year). Keays' daughter writes of her mother, the "Betsy Ross of Wyoming's flag," in one of this issue's "Wyoming Memories."

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Annals of Wyoming The Wyoming History Journal is published quarterly by the Wyoming State Historical Society in association with the Wyoming Department of Commerce, the American Heritage Center, and the Department of History, University of Wyoming. The journal was previously published as the *Quarterly Bulletin* (1923-1925), *Annals of Wyoming* (1925-1993), *Wyoming Annals* (1993-1995) and *Wyoming History Journal* (1995-1996). The *Annals* has been the official publication of the Wyoming State Historical Society since 1953 and is distributed as a benefit of membership to all society members. Membership dues are: single, \$20, joint, \$30; student (under 21), \$15; institutional, \$40; contributing, \$100-249; sustaining, \$250-499; patron, \$500-999; donor, \$1,000+. To join, contact your local chapter or write to the address below. Articles in *Annals of Wyoming* are abstracted in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.

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Wyoming Memories



Verna Keays, Wyoming's Flag Designer

By Priscilla Keyes Newell



Verna Keays at the time she designed the Wyoming State flag.

Verna Keays, who designed the Wyoming state flag, was my mother. Many people affectionately called her, "Wyoming's Betsy Ross." Her parents, pioneers in Wyoming, spent most of their lives in Buffalo.

Elizabeth Parke Keays, Verna's paternal grandmother, was a widow whose husband, a jeweler and silversmith, died in New Mexico, where he had gone hoping to be cured of tuberculosis when her son, Wilbur, was four years old. After his death, she conducted a small private school, educating Wilbur and several other children.

She left her home in Decatur, Illinois, to move to Colorado on April 20, 1866, with Wilbur, then ten years old, called Will by his family. They rode in a covered wagon, planned to live with her aunt, Elizabeth "Auntie" Hickock Stone, her mother's sister.¹

Elizabeth and Will crossed the plains with another family, led by a man who was a close friend of Elizabeth Stone. At Fort Kearney, Nebraska, where they waited for enough wagons to gather to be escorted

through Indian country by cavalry, a trunk with all Elizabeth's and Will's clothes was stolen. The sutler there gave Elizabeth enough calico for a dress and a shirt and overalls for Will.

They arrived in Fort Collins on June 1, 1866, where Elizabeth became the small community's first school teacher, holding her classes in Auntie Stone's home. She later married Harris Stratton, and they had three daughters.

In the fall of 1882, Will, now called Billy by his friends, first saw Wyoming on a hunting expedition with a man named Charlie Andrews, an engineer and surveyor. They rode from Fort Collins into southern and central Wyoming. The trip lasted from September 14 until the end of October. Billy and Charlie lived off the land, supplementing their meals of biscuits and bacon with rabbit, antelope, venison, duck, elk, buf-

¹ I have a copy of her diary about this trip, written by her daughter, Lerah.

falo and an occasional meal at a friendly rancher's table. It snowed several times and they were forced to stay in their tent for a day or two.²

He returned to Wyoming in 1884 to work on an irrigation project near Buffalo (which was soon abandoned), then became a hand on the Cross H ranch.

Verna's mother, Estella Ferguson, came to Wyoming from Cambridge, Ohio, to visit her sister, Clara Collins, who lived in Basin City. She was the youngest of nine children. Her father had been a colonel in the Civil War, fought in many battles. He was an attorney in Cambridge, was elected prosecuting attorney for two years in Guernsey County, and was a state senator in 1852-53. A fine horseman, he always attracted attention in parades when mounted on his charger; it was said that no local patriotic event was complete without an address by Colonel Ferguson. He pampered and adored his favorite child, Estella, who wished she could also be a lawyer, something which was not possible for women in those times.

Her oldest brother, Joseph, was a captain in the civil war. When the war ended he also came west, for the next seventeen years served in the regular army. He

fought with Reno's cavalry in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, was wounded in the leg. He later returned to Ohio where he practiced law in Cambridge.

On her way to visit Clara, Estella passed through Buffalo and met Billy. She spent the winter with Clara; on her return in the spring, she again saw Billy. They were married in September of 1892 in Omaha, Nebraska, at the home of her aunt, then settled in Buffalo.

Estella was a high-spirited woman who carried herself with an air of arrogance, had dark hair and brown eyes. When I knew her later, she wore her then-white hair pulled back into a French twist. Wilbur was quiet and gentle with soft gray eyes; as an older man he had a Vandyke beard.

They opened a hotel, "The American," and ran it together. One of their most interesting guests was Tom Horn who, it is said, departed in a hurry ahead of law-

² Billy's diary, which I also have a copy of, contains vivid descriptions of the country, mentioning that the best area for elk was a few miles south of Casper and the buffalo range was northwest of Casper toward the South Fork of Powder River. The hunters didn't realize that the ground they camped on would produce millions of dollars worth of oil and gas forty years later.



(Front row, left to right): Polly, Betty, Alice. (Back row): Verna, her husband Arthur, Estella (holding Keating), Billy and Parke. Author's collection.

men. He forgot his spurs; they're now in the Jim Gatchell museum in Buffalo.

In 1910 Estella's brother, Valentine, "Uncle Vollie", a contractor and cabinet maker, spent a year with them building their permanent home. It sat on a hillside behind the post office, with a beautiful view of the Big Horn Mountains.³

Billy had many different occupations. Besides the hotel, he owned a restaurant. He also served as county clerk, county treasurer and postmaster.

Their daughter, Verna, was born August 16, 1893. Twelve years later, Estella had a son, Parke. Verna went through grammar school in Buffalo. She was a pretty child and young woman, with gray-green eyes and blonde hair which darkened to a medium brown as she grew older. She sometimes wore it on top of her head in a "Gibson Girl" style.

When she was in her teens, Verna went to Cleveland, Ohio, to live with an aunt of her friend, Eleanor Parmelee, where the two girls were to improve their knowledge of proper lady's behavior and study at Central High School. The Parmelee family was very close to Verna's family in Buffalo. Eleanor's father was a district judge.

In 1912, Verna finished high school and entered the Art Institute in Chicago for a three-year art course, from which she graduated with honors. The trip there began with Billy driving her to Clearmont in a horse-drawn buggy, where she took the Burlington train.

When she returned to Buffalo, her father urged her to enter a contest sponsored by DAR to design a state flag for Wyoming. She wasn't very excited about it, but after a bit of nagging by Billy, she began to think about her entry.

Verna said she woke up one night with the design complete in her mind. A friend was spending the night with her, but when Verna awakened her to tell her of the bison and Wyoming seal, the friend was too sleepy to care. Verna always believed this idea came from "the true source of all creation."

The prize for designing the flag was \$20. There were 37 entries. Verna's won. It was chosen at the annual convention of the Wyoming DAR in Sheridan in October, 1916.⁴ Several entries embodied the same symbolism, but the placing of the state seal on the bison helped win the contest because it represented the truly western custom of branding.⁵

Verna's entry was done in watercolor, gouache and ink. (See cover illustration). It was inscribed as follows by her mother in her beautiful handwriting:

Design for flag of State of Wyoming

Seal of Wyoming _____ The heart of the flag, the brand on bison.

American Bison _____ The monarch of the plains of Wyoming. (Incorrectly called buffalo.)

Red _____ The red man (Indian) and blood of Pioneers who reclaimed the country.

White _____ Freedom of plains and purity for all.

Blue _____ The blue of our sky and mountains color symbolic of fidelity and justice.

Colors _____ Those of our national flag.

Designed by

Verna Keays

Buffalo, Wyoming

Scale 1 inch = 1 foot

Verna was 24 when the flag she designed was officially designated the state flag. The flag was adopted by the 14th Wyoming State Legislature on January 31, 1917.⁶ One of the six original flags is now in the Carbon County Museum, Rawlins. Made by Verna, it was given to W. W. Daley when he was a member of the State Senate, later donated to the museum by his son, P. E. Daley. Sen. Daley introduced the bill into the senate. It was passed by both houses. Governor J. M. Carey signed the bill along with another introduced by Daley designating the Indian Paintbrush as the state flower.⁷

The original flags were made of taffeta, with colored pieces stitched together by machine. The bison is painted by oil on the blue center field and the state seal is inked in on the bison. It measures 28 x 40 inches.

Verna designed the bison to face into the wind. Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, whose idea it was to have the

³ In the 1980s this house, still on its hillside long after Billy and Estella were gone, was moved to a new location on the north edge of Buffalo, where it is now. It was replaced by a drive-in bank. Moving it must have been quite a job as it has two stories, four bedrooms and an inner lining of brick for insulation behind its white clapboard exterior.

⁴ *Buffalo Bulletin*, Feb 1, 1917.

⁵ *Casper Tribune Herald*, 1967.

⁶ *Buffalo Bulletin* February 1, 1917

⁷ The Daley Bill for state flag was Senate File 25 and his bill for the state flower was Senate File 26. A bill in the 28th state legislature authorized giving Verna one of the first flags in recognition of her service to the state. The bill was passed and signed by Governor Lester C. Hunt on February 20, 1945. He surprised her with two flags, one hand painted, made of silk taffeta, its paint cracked with age, and a new silk one. These were to be retained by Verna and her heirs, but she gave them to the archives of the State of Wyoming, "for the good of the state."

*Verna and the State Flag she designed.
Photo made about 1960.*

Author's collection



Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) competition for the flag, served as the organization's State Regent at the time. Dr. Hebard thought the bison would look better facing the staff. The first flags ordered were made in this way. She had a painting prepared by a New York artist of the state flower, and a design of the state flag. Nothing officially was ever done to make the change in the way the bison faced; it was Dr. Hebard's idea.⁸

In Verna's scrapbook about the flag, there is a letter from Dr. Hebard. In it, Dr. Hebard asked, "I am wondering if in the outline of the buffalo's face could there not be a little forelock running down and not just one continuous straight line from the top of his ear to his mouth?"⁹

With Dr. Hebard's letter in Verna's scrapbook is one from a friend of hers with a few suggestions about the flag, such as:

Could you have the bison lift one foot, smile a little to relieve his solemn look, or wink his right eye, sort of playfully, you know, as if he were looking at Dr. Grace Hebard.¹⁰

Near the time she designed the flag, she was the winner of a prize offered by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad for a design to be used in dining car decoration.

Verna worked in commercial art in Buffalo after her graduation from the Art Institute. She designed sev-

eral small decals of a bison with the Big Horns behind it which says, "Cloud Peak." On the back of one, Verna wrote: "Made for Buffalo, ordered by John C. Flint, designed by Verna Keays 1919." Also, probably done for a realtor, she painted a water-color map of Buffalo, showing what must have been a new housing development drawn on the edge of town toward the mountains.

In 1919 Verna was a bill clerk for the Wyoming State Senate. Two years later, she was telephone messenger for the senate.¹¹

Her brother, Parke, attended the University of Nebraska. He eloped with Alice Purcell from Broken Bow, Nebr. Later, he became editor of the *Custer County Chief*, the local newspaper, owned by Alice's family. When Parke brought Alice home, Estella was so angry

⁸ Dr. Hebard was very active at the University of Wyoming, held many offices there, including service on the Board of Trustees, board secretary, librarian and teacher of political science and economy. See Larry Brown, "First Lady of Wyoming History, Grace Raymond Hebard," *Wyoming Annals* 66 (Fall, 1994), 6. See also Biographical files, American Heritage Center.

⁹ Letter, Dr. Grace Hebard, University of Wyoming Department of Political Economy, Laramie, to Verna Keays, February 25, 1919. There are 36 "Dear Verna" letters in the "Wyoming State Flag" vertical file in the collections of the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie.

¹⁰ Verna Keays Keyes scrapbook, author's collection.

¹¹ "List of Officers, Members, Committees and Employees," The Senate of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth State Legislatures of Wyoming, Regular Sessions, 1919 and 1921.

she refused to shake Alice's hand when they were introduced. She calmed down eventually. Parke and Alice had a happy marriage. They had three children-- a son and two daughters.

Verna had planned to teach, but after World War I, veterans had been invited to file homestead claims near Buffalo and the town was filled with soldiers. My father was one of them. Verna fell in love with him and they were married on June 1, 1921.

Arthur Keyes, actually named Charles Arthur, was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1895. His mother died when he was very young and he was raised in Park Ridge, Illinois, by his grandmother and aunt and uncle, Eva and Henry Werno.

He was slender, slight in build, about five feet, ten inches tall, with light brown hair, gray eyes, fine features. He was a tense, high strung man who drove himself to succeed until the end of his life. He loved music, had a fine tenor voice. He studied at a Chicago music conservatory and volunteered as an usher at the Chicago opera.

In World War I Arthur served in the entertainment corps of the Marines, for the most part in France. He took great pride in the fact that Bobbie Burns and his "bazooka," a famous comedian of the times, was part of his group.

Verna's name changed from Keays to Keyes, pronounced the same. She told me when she heard someone say, "Mrs. Keyes" in the first days of her marriage, she thought they were speaking to her mother.

My father gave up his homestead and they moved to Billings, Montana, where my sister, Betty, was born on December 18, 1923.

My father refused to work for someone else. He was very much his own person. He attempted several business ventures which were unsuccessful. They moved to Casper, and I was born there on February 25, 1925.

Casper then had about 40,000 people. It was a booming oil town, with three refineries, Texaco, Standard and White Eagle, which was a subsidiary of Ohio Oil, spewing sulfur fumes into the air. Everyone said it just "smelled like money"

Verna and Arthur had and made good friends there, including Mae and Warren Hagist. Mae had family in Buffalo and Warren worked for the White Eagle refinery. Other friends were George Ann and Marvin Bishop. Marvin was our attorney and Verna and George Ann often played bridge together. Others were Renan and Davey Johnston. Davey was regional head of the local power company and one of the first to climb the Grand Teton. Later, a coal-fired power plant near Glenrock was named for him.

At first, we rented a small white frame house. Later, my father built a larger home on Grant Street. The house still stands.

My father founded a steel fabrication company, Keyes Tank and Supply Company, which constructed primarily oil storage tanks. The oil industry was thriving in Wyoming, and he was doing well, his small company growing, but the depression of the thirties had a dramatic affect on all our lives.

Feeding us, maintaining a normal family life, became increasingly difficult for him. One of the few times I saw my mother cry was when Betty, playing a child's game, broke a dozen eggs on her little red chair. They decided my mother, Betty and I should move to Buffalo and live with my mother's parents while my father stayed in Casper and tried to re-build his business, which at this point was worthless.

In the summer of 1931, Verna gathered some of our belongings together, stored furniture with friends and my father drove the three of us to Buffalo. He sold our home and found a room in a boarding house. He had little money, but never declared bankruptcy, eventually repaying every debt.

Buffalo was a small town of about 4,000 people. Clear Creek ran through the center of town. On hot summer days, one felt cooler watching it swirling under the bridge on Main Street. What was intended to be a short time in Buffalo stretched into nine years. It must have been hard for my grandparents to give up the leisure they had earned after raising their own family. They suddenly had two lively little girls, six and eight, and their mother, who silently grieved over the loss of her home and her absent husband. We never felt deprived of the security of being surrounded by a warm, caring family. They put up with us, our muddy feet, our friends, our puppies. Their patience and the courage of our mother and father left Betty and me as fulfilled and happy as any child could be.

There were many friends for Verna from her growing-up years in Buffalo. Ruby and Jack Burnett lived across the street. Jack was English--there were quite a few English people in the area--and Ruby was part Indian, looked it with her high cheekbones, brown eyes. Verna was always welcome there for a brief rest when things got a little up-tight at home. Dave and Bess Muir came to our house often for dinner. Dave was Scottish, and Bess taught school. On some holidays, Dave would march down Main Street playing his bagpipes. Flora Laing was a widowed friend, with whom Verna often enjoyed evening bridge games.

Verna was a gregarious woman, liked people, made friends easily, and enjoyed a good conversation with

just about anyone. Once we went to a Crow Indian fair. Verna sat next to a Crow woman at the rodeo and as a young Crow bolted out of the chute on a bucking horse, the woman proudly said to Verna, "He's my baby!"

My father came to see us as often as he could, and we sometimes went with him when he called on oil companies and refineries. He didn't seem to think in terms of fast or slow when he drove a car. He just settled himself behind the steering wheel, put his foot on the gas pedal and took off. There was no speed limit in Wyoming at that time. One could go fifty to one hundred miles with no signs of human habitation, seeing only an occasional windmill whirling endlessly in its seemingly lifeless domain.

On one of our trips, Verna kept asking Arthur to slow down. He persistently ignored her. When we came to a small town, she told him to let us out. She felt she could no longer risk our lives with his dangerous driving. He stopped, my sister and I obediently hopped out behind Verna and watched as he roared past the houses and vanished over a hill. Within a few minutes we heard the sound of an engine and he whizzed into sight, driving as fast as ever. Verna, Betty and I climbed back in, he turned the car around and once more we headed down the road --at the same speed as before.

We joined the Episcopal Church. The minister, Elvin L. Tull, a tall, dark-haired man with glasses, was as familiar with archeology and astronomy as he was with theology. Betty and I sang in the children's choir each Sunday at a vesper service. To promote good attendance at choir practice, he gave each child in the choir a candy bar every other Thursday.

Mrs. Tull wore her black hair in a knot on top of her head, from which many stringy clumps escaped. Reverend and Mrs. Tull and Verna became close friends. The Tulls knew a great deal about Indian artifacts, and Verna spent many happy hours with them rattling through the sagebrush in the Tull's old car looking for rock scrapers and arrowheads.

Verna organized the first Girl Scout troop in Buffalo when I was about eight. Our activities included meeting in the Parish Hall of the Episcopal Church, cook-outs, hiking, and looking for Indian artifacts, now one of Verna's favorite hobbies, which she shared with the girls.

After a couple of years, two weeks of Girl Scout camping in the Big Horns each July became an annual experience. The camp was called Camp Sourdough, situated in an area developed by Buffalo citizens for various community activities. A couple named George and Nora Gardner were two of its mainstays, Nora,

with black hair and snappy eyes to match it, was the cook, always generous with a cookie for lucky ones who were near when she was baking. George, gray haired, deeply tanned, with faded blue eyes and skin etched with fine lines by the wind and sun ever-present in his cowboy's life, and a helper, brought a string of horses, taught us how to care for and ride them.

The camp had a main lodge and dining room, one other small cabin, and two outhouses. Most of us lived in tents while some of the leaders lived in the cabin. Clear Creek flowed beside us, its water bubbling over and around rocks, providing a place for baths and wading.

Verna's interest in camping expanded and she took training in camp-directing from the National Girl Scout Council. She then directed camps in several places in the west. While she was involved in her training, she met Lady Baden-Powell, international president of Girl Scouts. Verna felt that our camping and scouting experiences helped fill the void in our lives caused by Arthur's absence. Wherever Verna went camp directing, Betty and I tagged along. One interesting camp was in the Black Hills of South Dakota, another at a dude ranch named Crossed Sabers outside Cody. The owner let the girls camp there before the dude season opened.¹² Verna was a member of the regional committee for scouts for four years, served as chairman of the regional camp committee for three years and did much to improve camping in her region.¹³

Every summer we spent several weeks in the Big Horns with friends. The Parmelee family had a cabin there, and when Eleanor came to visit with her three girls, we joined them. Verna took her water colors, her preferred paint, and would sit and paint someone's cabin or a lake while we kids climbed rocks, crossed Clear Creek on fallen trees, ran and shrieked at each other and picked flowers.

Another friend, Miss Mary W. Lane, a small, gray-haired woman who had taught my Uncle Parke, Betty and me sixth grade, had come west from Massachusetts. Miss Lane always had Sunday dinner with our family. She had joined Wilbur and Estella for years, and after Betty and I arrived, Miss Lane always left two quarters on Estella's dresser for us. She also had a small cabin. Each summer Verna, Betty and I spent one or two weeks there. Clear Creek ran near it, the

¹² In 1996 my husband and I were driving from Yellowstone Park to Cody, and we saw the sign, Crossed Sabers. We went in and met the daughter of the present owners. The ranch looked just like I remembered it.

¹³ Unidentified newspaper clipping, author's collection.

Ranger Station was close, Frank Horton had a dude ranch down the road a couple of miles. Frank had been in the state legislature when Verna worked there and was very kind to her.

Most people dropped lime down the holes in outhouses regularly to help eliminate odors and keep them sanitary. Miss Lane preferred to use ashes from the wood stove for this purpose. The procedure was to leave them in a metal bucket until there were no simmering coals or hot ashes, then dump.

On the last July day of one summer's visit, we ate a picnic lunch by a little stream across the road from the cabin. A thick screen of large pines, aspen and willow bushes hid the road from our sight. We were munching our ham sandwiches when we began to hear a strange crackling noise coming from the direction of the road. The sound became louder; finally Verna told Betty to go see what was happening out there.

Betty disappeared through the willows, then screamed, "It's a fire, it's a fire!" Miss Lane's outhouse and several good-sized pines were hurling flames toward the sky.

"Go get the ranger!" Verna shouted to Betty, who took off, pounding down the dusty road.

Verna began lugging buckets of water up the hill from the stream, pitching it into the flames. About the time the ranger and helper arrived in their pickup with tanks of water to strap on their backs, Frank Horton came driving down the road, on his way from Paradise Ranch to Buffalo.

The fire was extinguished. We arrived in Buffalo late that afternoon and everyone in town knew, thanks to her friend Frank Horton, that Verna Keyes had burned down Miss Lane's outhouse. This event gained her much more attention than her flag for quite awhile in Buffalo. She was fined by the government for each tree that was destroyed and paid to have the outhouse rebuilt.

In 1941 our family was re-united in Casper. The depression was over and my father's company was again successfully doing business. He wanted to build another home, so we rented a house to live in while it was being completed. The new one was to be on a hillside which overlooked Casper and the countryside beyond. Betty would be a senior in Casper high school, and I was a sophomore.

Verna's life changed. She gave up her work in Girl Scouting and became very involved in Republican politics. She served a term as chairman of the Natrona County Republican Party. When Nelson Rockefeller campaigned in Wyoming, she officially greeted him.

Also, she was active in the Casper Fine Arts Club, of which she was one of the founders, DAR and PEO. She spent many afternoons playing bridge.

Our lives changed in another way, also. Arthur had been raised in the Christian Science church, and when we returned from Buffalo, we attended their services regularly. Verna eventually became a devout Christian Scientist. After I married, my husband and I returned to the Episcopal church.

Betty went to college and Verna and I had the fun and hard work of moving into the new home.

She received many letters about the flag, answering all that required an answer. She spoke to many groups of people, not only in Casper, all over the state. Each year she was asked to talk to fourth graders in Casper. She loved children and enjoyed doing this. After her speech, many children wrote her, telling her how much they had liked hearing her story. She kept the letters, re-reading some of the special ones and cherishing them.

The DAR chapter in Casper gave out "C" pins several times a year to honor students. Verna often handed



Arthur and Verna at their new house, 1941.

out the pins. Betty usually marched across the stage to receive her pin. I preferred to sit in the back of the auditorium as at that time I was not a diligent student, preferring more social activities, with boys if possible.

In 1941 an air base for training of B-24 crews opened in Casper. Verna became a gray lady and went to the base once a week to help the soldiers, writing letters for sick ones, doing whatever else was needed. Many soldiers sat at our dinner table during the next few years.

I married one of them. In 1944 I fell in love with Donald Newell, a pilot. He went overseas to Italy and I returned to my second year of college. When he came back the next June with a purple heart and a distinguished flying cross, we were married in the living room of my home. We had three children, a son and two daughters. Betty married a navy ensign named Norman Williams; they had four children, three girls and a boy.

Verna and Arthur decided to build another house. They sold the one at 711 East 11th Street and rented an apartment.

His business was thriving when he slipped on a patch of ice outside his office and fell, breaking his leg. His death in May, 1951, at the age of 56, was attributed to a blood clot from this injury. Although he was a Christian Scientist, Arthur had medical help for his broken leg, was hospitalized and wore a cast. At the time he died, the new house wasn't finished. Verna lived in apartments the rest of her life. She sold Arthur's company, including a new plant he had built in Provo, Utah.

Verna and Arthur had planned to travel when he retired. After his death, she set out on her own. First, she went on a cruise to the Mediterranean even though she knew no one on the ship. She invited Don and me and Mark, our small son, to New York to see her off. She made friends so easily she didn't have a lonely moment and communicated with quite a few people she met on the cruise for many years. Next, she toured the Orient, visiting Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong and other places. A friend went with her this time and, unfortunately, became very sick with pneumonia on the trip.

Verna brought home beautiful silk fabrics and gifts for all the family from this trip. She was an excellent seamstress, and made several dresses for Betty, me and herself. All through the years she had sewed for us, smocking our dresses when we were small. When we were in high school, we would see a dress we liked in a store and Verna would whip one up just like it! She made my high school graduation dress.

Alaska was another place she enjoyed seeing--this time, with a healthy friend accompanying her. She took

Don and me on a trip with her to the Bahamas. Each year she alternated Christmas and Easter vacations with Betty and me, usually staying several weeks with each of us, and we both visited her some time every summer in Wyoming with our children.

One year she took all of us, Betty and Norman and all their children, Donald and me and all our children, plus a baby sitter for the younger ones, to a ranch outside Jackson. We hiked, rode horses, Verna always riding with us. We went into Jackson. They daily had a fake robbery with the sheriff and all the "bad guys" chasing each other around. The kids loved it.

For many years, Verna managed the Christian Science Reading Room in Casper, which was good for her. It gave her days purpose and kept her from feeling lonely. She lived for thirty years as a widow, as courageously as she had lived all her life. Betty and Norm, then retired, had been staying in an apartment near her when she died in 1982 at age of 89.

Whenever Don and I go back to Wyoming, which is often, and I first see that bison flying in Wyoming's almost ever-present wind, my throat tightens, my eyes tingle.



Flag as it now appears--Dr. Hebard "reversed" the buffalo from Keays' original design.

The author, Priscilla Keyes Newell, is the daughter of Verna Keays Keyes. Priscilla, always known as "Polly" by her family and friends, married Donald Newell in 1945. After World War II, Newell graduated with a degree in civil engineering from the University of Wyoming. He began working for the Keyes Companies. After Priscilla's father died and the companies were sold, he worked in steel construction. He held executive positions in Birmingham, Chicago, Shreveport, Dallas, Newport News and finally, in Bristol, Tennessee, where he and Polly have retired.

Wyoming Memories

TALES OF THE HOMESTEAD

BY MARGARET M. ARROSS

One of the first colonists, James Otis is a direct ancestor on my mother's side. This James Otis also was one of the signatures on the Declaration of Independence. He was free of spirit, intelligent, fiercely political, in that he desired much, and immediate change in his new world, and was willing to work as well as fight for that change. From him, through the female descendants, came the Havens, our great grandfather.¹

This story begins much later, in Charles City, Iowa, with Willus Elton Haven physically striking Carrie Weeks Haven, causing her to fall down a set of stairs.² This, apparently was either enough the first time, or it had happened before and she resolved to end it then - it is somewhat unclear because the story was not something our mother wished to talk about. Family violence of any kind was a taboo subject with our mother. I consider it amazing that she told me at all. Divorcing Willus Haven, an almost unheard of act for that time, but true to her ahead-of-her-time nature, grandmother resolved to take her children and head West to seek her fortune. She had two sisters, Helen and Marie, who had both married well and gone West with their husbands, and that should be good enough for her family and for society. Her life was now her own - she would live her own history..

There were three of them that went with Carrie Weeks Haven--Jean the eldest girl, Irving the only boy, and the youngest, Helen, our mother. Another daughter, Louise, had died in childhood some years earlier, in about 1905. Carrie had an elderly mother, whom she took with her and cared for until she died. This family on the female side has always been close and available for one another throughout the travails of life.

By all accounts, Carrie was extremely capable. Her

father, being one of the few farsighted men of his time, wished his daughters to be educated. He was a newspaper man himself, and taught Carrie enough of the trade that she was able to support herself and the children adequately, but by no means richly, while they were growing up.

The first stop was outside Rapid City, S.D., where Carrie, her sister Marie, and her friend Mable Zimmer took up homesteads. Much strife came during this time, with sub-zero temperatures, inadequate housing in the form of the drafty homestead shacks, lack of fruit, there being almost none available even in the stores at that time, due to shipping delays and shortages. Once, during this period, Carrie sent daughter Helen home to attempt to stay with the Haven's for awhile, since she was the youngest. She did not wish to stay with her father, and contacted Carrie to let her come home. This was done, and she made the long train trip across the plains again alone, arriving at Rapid City once more, none the worse for her adventures, having seen a man dead from being run over by the train while lying on the tracks and having an anxious moment when she could not locate her ticket. The ticket was located at last by some means, and she was allowed to go on.

Carrie worked in a printing office or newspaper in Rapid City, managing to save enough money to move again to the young frontier cowtown of Buffalo, Wyoming, where she and several other stockholders began a second biweekly publication for the town of Buffalo called the *Buffalo Voice*. After beginning publishing,

¹ The lineage can be found written out on a plain sheet of paper in the family Bible.

² The Havens' were grandparents of the author.

she found other newsprint and Linotype equipment she needed in Gillette, and she, her daughter Helen, and Helen's school friend Ida Potts went to Gillette and brought it back.

Carrie was very active politically, especially in Women's Rights.

One night, coming home late down main street, Carrie and Helen were almost run over by a man on a snorty horse. This man was wearing a long buffalo-type greatcoat, and the horse was frightened by it flapping in the windy night. It was in dead of winter, also, and very cold. The man managed to turn the spooking horse back off the sidewalk into the street once more, and the two women continued on. Later, the man called Carrie to apologize for almost running into her, (which turned out to be an excuse to see her). The man became Carrie's second husband, Earl Miller.

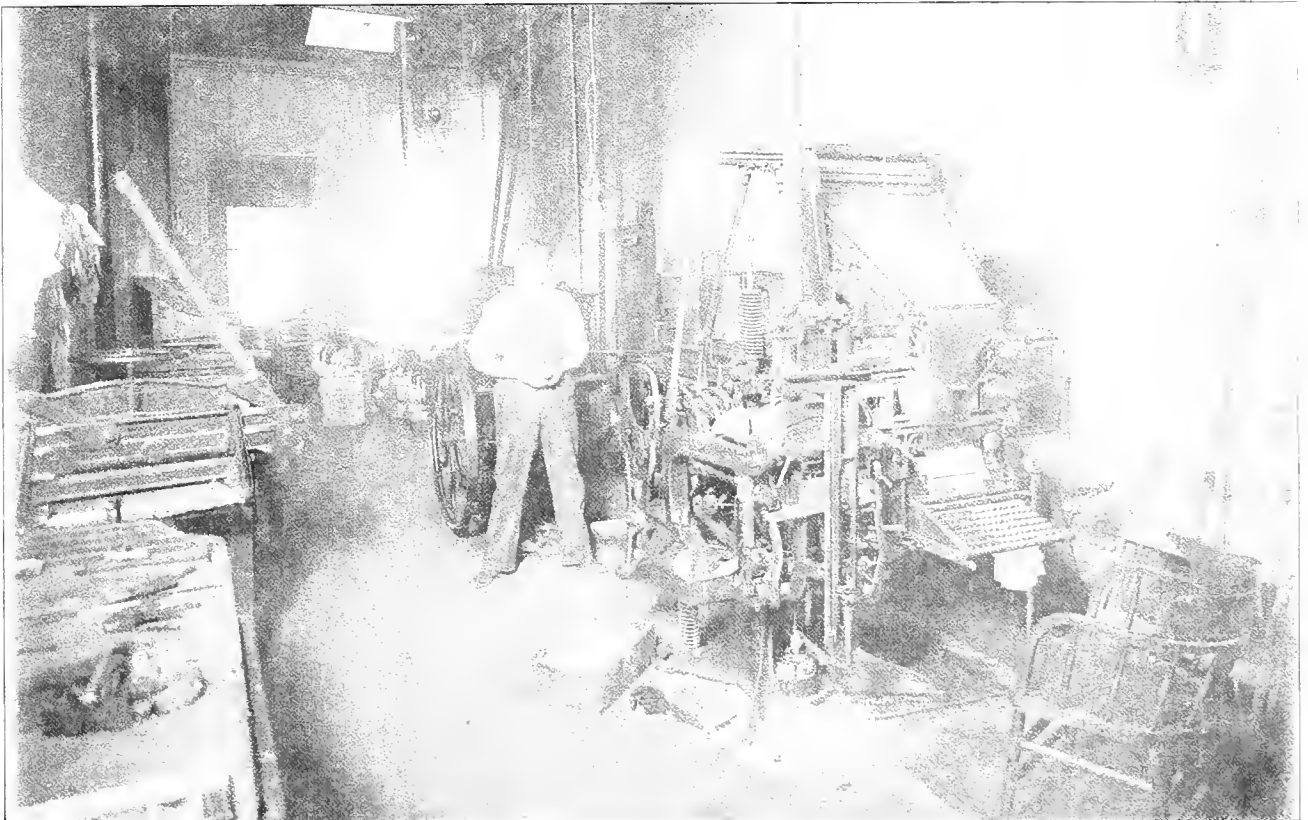
Earl was an excellent carpenter and he was good help in the newspaper, when she could keep him working. By all accounts, he did not hold steady, and she could never sufficiently count on him for support, either monetarily or morally. Nonetheless, she lived with him until she died, thinking that since she had been foolish enough to marry unwisely again, she may as well see it through. Helen never spoke ill of Earl, though, saying that he was good natured, and never mean to any of Carrie's children. This was a lot, in those days, when

men did virtually as they pleased with the little woman and the kids.

This was now 1924. Helen Haven had been well received in Johnson County High School. She was one of the foundation members of the girls agriculture class, helping form the group. She was one of the foundation members of the girls basketball team, and a "yell leader" for the boys football team. She was editor of the school paper and of the yearbook. She was interested in education, and planned to become a school-teacher, all of this being borne out by newspaper articles and her school yearbooks. She loved horses, and she and her friend, Ida Potts, rode together a lot, taking long rides up the Black and Yellow Trail (now Highway 16) which was an old Indian trail over the mountain to Tensleep, still visible. On one of these rides, they found an Indian arrow with the point and the old buckskin still holding it in place. They brought it down and gave it to the Gatchell family, who were in the initial phases of a fledgling museum.

That summer, she worked for Jack Moore, who had a ranch outside of Buffalo. Jack was a pioneer who had been in the Wagon Box battle with the Sioux.³

³ I wish I had pressed her more for details of the acquaintance of this man, but alas, I did not when I could, and the history is long lost now. She mentioned it in passing, not considering how important it may actually become.



News room of the Buffalo Voice, Buffalo. Earl Miller, Carrie's husband, is pictured. Author's collection.



Carrie
Weeks
Haven
Miller

Author's collection

When the Billy Creek Oil Field came through, Carrie took Mom and they went out to photograph the occasion for the paper. These photos captured the gusher as it happened. Carrie was also invited out to the Hole in the Wall ranch for a photo session and a meeting of some kind and took Mom with her.⁴

THE SCHOOLMARM:

Trail Creek-Cody, Wyoming, Fall, 1926-Spring, 1928

Mom graduated from Johnson County High School in the spring of 1925. She then went to Laramie for Summer School where she completed her teacher's degree for that time, which was called Normal Training. When she successfully went through the course, she was on her own. Her uncle by marriage, Ralph Hardin, (married to Carrie's sister, Helen) was superintendent of schools in Cody at the time. He offered to help her attain a position, but Helen declined, wishing to "do it herself." She answered an ad in a Gillette paper. They had a country school between Linch and Mid-west and needed a teacher. She arrived, full of energy and enthusiasm, but it was short-lived. The schoolhouse was a one-room shack on the prairie, which in itself was no shock or even a surprise. She expected hardship and understood the country she lived in, understood trials of the fledgling ranches and struggling people who were attempting to educate their children without sending them the miles and miles by wagon, ancient car or horseback to the larger schools. (Even the larger schools were not so large in those days).

But she did not expect to earn \$30 per month and

then have her room, board and teaching supplies deducted from it. This she learned, in addition to the fact that the one room school's wood stove was too small to adequately combat the cold, after she arrived. She felt that even though she wanted to give it a try, she simply could not afford to do it. So, putting her pride in her pocket, she contacted her Uncle Ralph and he set her up with her first real teaching job, just outside of Cody at the Trail Creek Ranch.

Trail Creek, nestled in a sheltered draw beyond the river at the base of the Rattlesnake mountains (part of the Absaroka Range), was a cozy, peaceful valley that was watched over by a large red butte that jutted out of the foot of the mountain, in total contrast to the rest of the terrain. The old Bannock Indian trail wound along in this area and over the mountain.⁵

The little log schoolhouse was quite adequate for the purpose of a country learning center. Children from families at several of the other far-flung ranches of the Cody country, as far away as the Painter Ranch in Sunlight Basin, and from Clark, almost in Montana, attended the school. Helen taught there from 1925 to 1928 when the school was closed in the consolidation process. This is the assignment that earned her a spot in the Park County Historical Book as being one of the first schoolmarms of the district. She loved her job, and the children - she was full of stories about them in later years. It was a good time for her.

It was at Trail Creek that she met our father, who was a cowboy there, working with the sheep and cattle. He spent part of the summer packing salt to the stock on the mountain range, and they were taken with each other, to the utter consternation and horror of Uncle Ralph and Auntie Helen. Our father was known to drink, and our mother's family were teetotalers, warning her of the potential problems alcohol brought to a family situation. In spite of this, he was a good person, and though he was certainly not of their kind or social stature due in part to his lack of more opportune family circumstances, they did not really harbor any huge dislike of him. Anyone conversing with him, even in passing, could tune in to his keen mind and worthwhile character. But they also knew only too well the kind of life our mother would lead if she married him--leaping from job to job, ranch to ranch, always in spare cir-

⁴ I believe the lady who owned the ranch at that time was named Mrs. Webb, although I'm not sure of this. The Archives of this old newspaper are found in the Johnson County Library.

⁵ During the year that he worked the ranch land, our father found several ancient pole tipi's, some in fairly good condition still, some with traces of rawhide still clinging to them. The ranch was then owned by the Heald family.

cumstances, in search of the elusive dream. Of course, they were right.

In 1928, after school closed for the summer, the little country schools began to consolidate into the larger districts. At that point, all school teachers had to possess a four-year degree in order to teach. Funds were not available. Mom, never the aggressor, was confused and frightened. She then turned her thoughts to marriage, as Dad had suggested, and planned to obtain the rest of her degree later. Perhaps he would help her--perhaps. To use her own words "I didn't know what to do next. I was desperate." Dad went to Washington state to fight fires that summer, and Mom had gone there before him after the school closed, to stay with another aunt (Aunt Marie--another sister of Carrie) until she could find another job. It was there that she and Dad were married. It was at that turning point in their lives that the rift in her family occurred. She summed it up several times, but always in the same short, defensive sentences because it was never easy for her to speak of it. Dad had evidently pulled up to the curb in his car with several other people. He had been fighting fire, as had his companions. They were grimy with soot and ash. They came from the hills into the town of Everett, Washington, and had come straight to her door to ask for her. These are her own few words she used to describe the scene that followed:

Auntie Marie looked out the window and saw them getting out of the car. She turned to me and exclaimed "You are NOT going out with THOSE people, are you?" I told her, "Auntie Marie, there's nothing wrong with Jack. You are not even giving him a chance. Yes, I am going with them and if you don't approve, I just won't come back.

She also said it was not something she wanted to do against the wishes of her family.⁶ She never returned to school to finish her teaching degree, and she saw very little of her family after that. Working in Washington that summer, they were married in August, and stayed the winter. They returned to Wyoming the next spring and took up a homestead claim in the Garfield Peak area, known as Snyder Basin, 60 miles west of Casper on the Raderville Route. This was the wide open, stark, and strangely beautiful land of contrasts that always seemed to hold their hearts. They returned to retire close to the same valley they had helped settle some forty years before as youngsters. True to the predictions of Aunties Marie and Helen, they had little more material possessions than they had when they started. The salmon swim unerringly upstream to the spawn-

ing grounds - the deer return to the place of their fawning - and people will often do the same if the first memories of their youth are powerful enough.

THE HOMESEEEKERS - 1930

Joe Snyder--he was mentioned to Mom and Dad when they began to take up their claim in the valley. He, too, had homesteaded that particular area, had proved up, and leased his land to them to compliment theirs while they were proving up. He also knew Orey and Ben Roberts, who were neighbors in the valley, and introduced the folks to them. He was full of tales of the old days, and gave them much history of the valley, in-

⁶ In my mind's eye, I can picture her there at the window, in absolute emotional conflict - standing up against authority - which was not at all her usual nature - and loyally defending something she felt was right or someone she loved - which definitely was her nature. The rest of the story that follows is the history of this encounter. Even as I write, seventy years after the fateful event occurred, I have the impulse to laugh out loud - although at the time it was probably anything but humorous.



Author's collection

The author's father, L. J. McMorow.

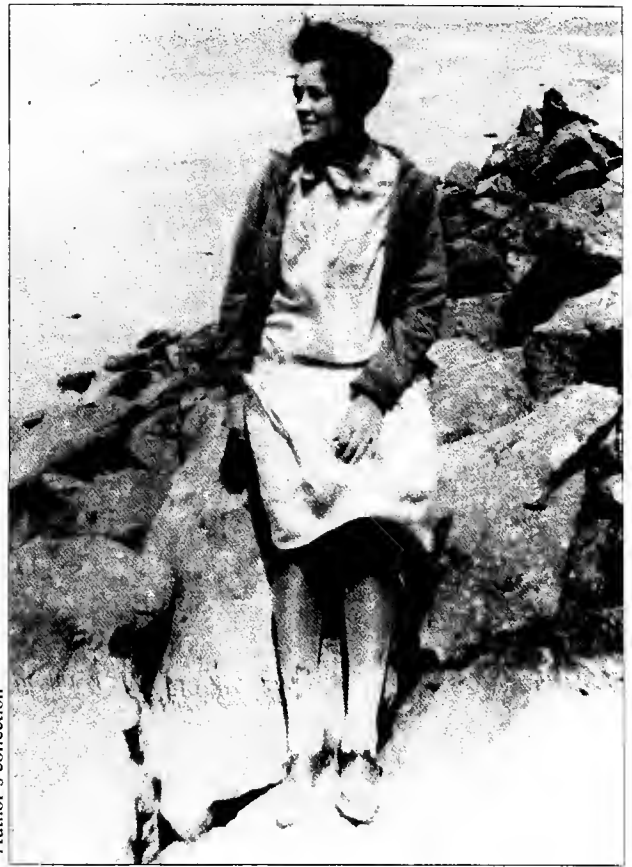
cluding the fact that it had been on the route from the Hole-in-the-Wall to Brown's Park in Colorado--the Outlaw Trail, as it was known.

They talked it over, contacted our mother's brother, who by this time was in California, our dad's brother, Bob, in Idaho, and convinced them both to join them in staking the claims. If they took the claims to adjoin each other, a large portion of the entire valley would be theirs. A third person, whom Dad had worked with at Healds, Paul McKenna, turned out to be a reprobate, without much to recommend him at all. He was added to this group and they all filed. McKenna left before the others, much to the relief of the others.

The valley was broad and green, surrounded by a range of small mountains through which flowed a sweet water creek, fed by springs on all sides. It was sweet water in an area of soda and alkali that spread on all other sides around it, beyond the sheltering arms of the basin. This made the wide expanse valuable because the soil was rich. The rust-red, iron-tinted soil clung to the clothes like dye, but would grow anything once water was put to it. It promised to be worth many times over the cost of the improvements, and indeed it was, had they only stayed the course that they set for themselves that day as they rode up the old wagon tracks with Joe. Many years later, they described the lush condition of the range and grass: "It was thick and high, very little brush scattered through it, growing tall enough to whip the stirrups as we rode."

Joe took them past Orey Roberts, who lived at the mouth of the valley, almost to the Raderville Route road that ran past to Casper, past the old home place Joe's family had started, long gone with only the lone cottonwood planted by his mother remaining to mark the site. A faint trace of the foundation for the original cabin was still there, and they rode past it on up the draw. It was there that the folks decided to build their cabin, with the view of Garfield Peak beyond.

They arranged to lease Joe's ground, and went to town to begin paper work for their own adjoining claims. Shortly after, arriving back in Thermopolis for a last business visit with Joe, they bought five head of horses from Squire Jones, a local horseman whose ranch lay up Buffalo Creek. These horses were - "Old Maybe" "Tripods" "Bess" "Uncle Wiggley" and another whose name has gone. Taking the horses, they drove them from Thermopolis straight through the back country to Garfield Peak. It took three full days to make the trip. They described the wild land, the creeks, the skies and stars at night, an old cabin they attempted to stay the night in, but couldn't due to the packrats that rushed



Helen Haven McMorrow, the author's mother

back and forth across their bedrolls - finally rolling them out in the brush outside by the campfire.

As the noon sun brightened directly above their heads, they stopped along a little creek bottom in a deep canyon and let the horses graze and rest. While they were there, a brand inspector driving a wagon and team with a horse tied to the tailgate stopped to talk with them, and asked for the bills of sale for the horses. Fortunately, everything was in order, Dad having worked enough of the big ranches to know what was needed. The inspector reminded them before he drove on, obviously referencing their youth, "Make sure you always have papers on any stock you push and you'll be ok."

Two days later, in the long shadows of the afternoon, they arrived at their new home - with their bedrolls, five head of horses, and each other.

GREEN VALLEY - 1930

They immediately camped near the spot where they intended to build their house and pitched a large, water-proof tent. This tent was their home for most of the early part of the spring and summer while they worked on the house. Mom's stepfather, Earl Miller, came alone from California and assisted them with its raising. They

had found an old house in town that was for sale, dismantled it, and hired the lumber hauled out from Casper. They put down a foundation, built a fireplace with an old scavenged culvert pipe for a chimney, and covered it with rock which looked nice for having been made such a long way out in the hills with so few tools and materials. They laid floors and covered them with cheap linoleum. They dug out the spring and fixed a spring house over it just behind the house, where it kept things cool even in the hottest summer days with the cold air circulating from the emerging icy water from the mountain - and the site was well shaded by the foliage of the trees that grew around it. Mom planted wild roses by the front door, hung curtains in her windows.

They took a walk up the ridge on the evening they had finished enough to move in, and sat looking over the valley, reveling in the sharp fresh air and the vista below.

The other young people were busy, too. Uncle Bob built a log cabin just over the ridge. Irving put up a flimsy pole shack and McKenna raised a house of logs on the creek below them. One of the first rifts in the harmony of the group came when they discovered McKenna had not bothered to fix or maintain a proper outhouse. This was disturbing to them, and it also was to the claims inspector when he appeared suddenly one day later the next year to approve the improvements. Whenever McKenna's name was mentioned, Mom looked very aggrieved, and it was apparent that no affection lay between them.

That summer was busy and flew past with no time to relax or reflect, as did several summers in the following years. During one of them, Mom's old school chum, Ida Potts, came with her little boy and stayed for a over

month. They took their children and made many walks into the hills, listening to the sweet bird voices, talking and lending moral support to each other as they had always done as girls. They were women now, with the colors of the universe not nearly as bright, nor the anticipation of the future quite so magical as it had seemed only a few short years before.

But it was the beginning of an era that forever captured the imagination and the memories of these people, binding them together as a backdrop that held everything firmly in place with them for almost sixty more years.

A SPARROW FALLS, 1930

The first winter spent on the Homesteads were especially hard on all of the young settlers. They had not had time to properly prepare for such a long time, such a long way from town, with such little monetary resources. To spend an entire winter subsisting on what had been gathered, bought, or prepared the fall before took planning.

Thus it was, that when the first storms hit the valley, all of them thought they had prepared enough for the first winter, and resigned to stay put. There was no way out except by horseback. The roads were impassable. Snow removal is still almost non-existent on the remote county roads, and at that time, it was nil. To attempt to drive out meant taking as much run at the drift as was possible, roaring the primitive automobile into it as far as could be thrust, making two tracks that stopped short, attempting to back up if the wheels could find purchase, and taking yet another run into the same tracks, hoping to move them several more feet before

the momentum failed. It was dangerous and futile in the worst of the weather. Horseback for sixty miles was not a viable option except in dire need, but even then, one cast around for all possible solutions before undertaking such a ride in sub-zero weather. If one actually made it out to the main road, there remained the return trip, with the hard-won tire tracks drifted shut again, only this time more firmly.



Author's collection

McMorrow homestead ruins as it appeared in 1998

Unrelenting, the storms came in one after another, with below-zero temperatures that made the gun barrels frost, making it dangerous to attempt to shoot. The snow was so deep that hunting was all but impossible because the animals had left the valley.

In the latter part of January, at the height of the winter shut-in, food was very low. Root vegetables from their garden, such as carrots and potatoes, were all that remained. The 50-lb. sack of pinto beans was gone. The deer that had been jerked from the fall before, what was left of it, had to be saved for the men to use on their rides on the trap lines, it being light and compact and the one absolutely necessary staple of the trips. The weather showed no warming with which to melt the snow. All seemed quite hopeless.

One morning, they fed the few chickens their meager breakfast of whole oats and potato peelings (most of the peelings used by the people themselves as "in the jackets"). They discovered through new eyes and awakening hunger a common sight that had completely gone unnoticed before in more provident circumstances.

Sparrows.

Hundreds of them. "They had always been there, come to think of it," they told me later. They came down to feed among the chickens, rushing in and around the crippled, frozen feet of the few tame fowl that remained --spared for the eggs -- to snatch bits of oats and food where they could. Plump and healthy, they appeared not much the worse for wear just because of the winter, and they did not migrate. They knew how to fend for themselves throughout the harshest turns of weather.

Armed with fresh resolve, Dad proceeded to the little log chicken house beneath the rim rocks. He carried with him a flat piece of leftover house sheeting, approximately 3 x 4 feet, along with a short stick and a tortured ball of twine that Mom had painstakingly saved from parcels (parcels being tied in twine to mail in those days). Within moments he had his scheme in motion. Propping the flat sheet of board up on the stick, fragile

support indeed, for a purpose, he affixed the end of the ball of twine to it, and unrolled it back to the house. He said he did this first so that the chickens and sparrows wouldn't eat too much of the bait before he was ready to spring the trap. This clearly shows how lean the provisions had become. When he had the length of twine safely leading away, he sprinkled oats under the board, and sat down to wait. Within moments, the area under the board was filled with little sparrows, noisily and aggressively shouldering one another for the oats.

With a jerk of his hand, Dad yanked the string, pulling the short stick support out from under the board, collapsing it instantly on the sparrows, driving them into the snow under it. Carefully, he removed the tiny feathered bodies, 23 of them in all. Cleaned, skinned and eviscerated, with several carrots, onions and potatoes, they made a wonderful stew, "just one succulent bite each," they told me later. But very tasty and plump. And, best of all, it was a renewable resource! "The Lord will provide."

Another testimonial, born of need, to the ancient law of "survival of the fittest." Once again, the creatures of the field--even the smallest, most unobtrusive of them, the sparrow--had filled a vital need in a desperate moment. If anyone needs any greater reason to respect these creatures of our natural world, I surely don't know what it would take to convince them....

Author Margaret M. Arross was born in 1945. She lives in the Powell, Wyoming, area where she continues an interest in photographing old Wyoming homestead cabins-- "as many as I can find on the back roads before they are all gone." This article is extracted from a book-length manuscript about the lives of her parents and family.

'Bivouac of the Dead'



By Kyle V. Walpole

Bennett Butte, viewed looking northeast. Miles used the butte to locate the Bannock encampment on the night of Sept. 3, 1878, and camped along Bennett Creek (the line of trees) after the battle. Author's photograph

When compared to the Custer disaster in June of 1876 or the wintry September battle of the Bear Paw Mountains that ended the Nez Perce run for Canada, the Battle of Bennett Butte or "Miles' Fight on the Clark's Fork," as it has become known, in September, 1878, seems little more than a skirmish.

Col. Nelson A. Miles and a small detachment of infantry, aided by some 75 Crow scouts, attacked a Bannock Indian village nestled on an island and west bank of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River. Within two hours the tally stood at eleven dead or dying, scores injured, and all hope lost that the party of some 20 Bannock¹ lodges could cross the national border into Canada to join Sitting Bull. As one battle participant put it, "for the number engaged, [the fighting] was as vicious as any old Indian-fighter would wish to see, and in their own argot, while it lasted 'h--l was a poppin'."²

The beginning of the Bannocks' "bid for freedom" came at the end of an already tortuous path. On the heels of a war that stretched from southwest Idaho into northeast Oregon, a well-traveled trail for one small band that refused the reservation system took them eastward into a new military division, through three different military departments, across the continental divide, and into the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming. The Bannock trail crossed paths with others such as Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh, members of the 1878 Hayden expedition, "Yellowstone" Kelly, and the determined sights of Col. Miles.

Within the story of events that ultimately brought Indian and soldier together on that dreary September

morning, a mystery also was written. Contemporary military accounts of the battle proved to be sketchy. Determining Crow and Bannock participants also becomes an elusive task because such names were seldom recorded. (The narrative thus emerges as a script with non-Indians in leading roles and the Crows and Bannocks as "extras"). Archaeological evidence such as firearms, shell casings, bullets, bones, and other artifacts have been found in various locations from as far south as an area referred to as "Miling Bend" to as far west and north as the current cemetery in the town of Clark. For years after the battle, animals scavenged buried remains, children growing up in the region dug up artifacts, and collectors added momentos to their desktops. Bones were removed from the site and stored in locations such as the Park County Jail vault.

With such sources guiding the amateur and professional researcher, the history of the battle developed into confused and often contradictory accounts. In some cases myth combined with vivid imagination transmogrified the infantry attack and capture of the Bannock village into a Custer-like duel to the last man or a Sand Creek style slaughter in which "all the women and children [were] killed."³ With both military officers and Indians sharing similar names in the Bannock war, (e.g. Capt. Evan S. Miles and Col. Nelson A. Miles

¹ Bannack also used as is "Shoshoni" for Shoshone.

² Fred A. Hunt, "A Purposeful Picnic," Part III, *Pacific Monthly*, XIX, (May, 1908), 524.

³ See report of L. Blakesley, State Historical Archives, Nov. 20, 1987. Also see report of May N. Ballinger, Park County Historical Society.

and Chief Egan and Capt. James Egan), much confusion resulted. Two authors place Col. Miles (instead of Capt. Evan S. Miles) as the actor in an engagement at the Umatilla Agency in Washington while at the same time confusing the chronology of events surrounding the Battle of Bennett Butte.⁴ Furthermore, most "researchers" delving into the battle's mysteries focused their searches to particular elements of the battle. Some relied on the written record, others on archaeological evidence, while a few contented themselves with battlefield folklore. These written recollections, like the artifacts, ended up scattered in various locations.

The story leading to Miles' Fight began in the valleys of eastern Idaho, west of Wyoming. Swarms of mosquitoes and grasshoppers swam in the summer air west of Yellowstone and the Tetons during that summer of 1878. The "last mountain man" of Wyoming, Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh, wrote that the "winged varmints" created quite a disturbance as they clouded the damp valleys that flowed into southeast Idaho. Although in "better health" despite the continuing effects of a smallpox infection that killed his Bannock wife, five children, and newborn baby in December of 1876, he struggled to keep the pests off his horses and himself while, at the same time, tending to daily necessities. By mid-July, the seasoned trapper noticed the skies darkened and another dilemma drifting toward the Great Divide. A neglected prospector's campfire had ignited the forest and "over a hundred miles of country" lay scorched and "still aburning."⁵

Other fires had begun that summer, fanned by the eastern winds of settlement and the jet stream of government bureaucracy and mismanagement. It seemed the U.S. government's war with bands of Bannock, Paiute, and Shoshone during the summer had, for the most part, concluded. Two large battles, one at Silver Creek and the other at Birch Creek, accompanied by a tenacious military pursuit, ended the majority of armed Bannock opposition. Disgruntled bands were left to scatter throughout Idaho into Oregon, Montana, and Wyoming. Leigh kept in touch with Fort Hall Reservation Agent W.H. Danilson. He had agreed to work as a spy during the fall, scouting the tributaries of the Snake River for signs of the scattered bands. Danilson speculated that many of the Indians he watched leaving the fort would travel to Camp Brown in Wyoming anticipating better conditions with Washakie's people along the Wind River. While some of those leaving, he believed, only sought respite from unsuitable conditions on the Fort Hall Reservation, he speculated that others might be disposed to acts of violence.⁶

The Bannocks were well-armed and mobile following a summer of warfare spanning from southeast Idaho to the eastern reaches of Oregon and southeast Washington. Reports came in August of encounters west of Yellowstone Park.⁷ From Camas Creek Stage Station, cavalryman Captain Sanford C. Kellogg telegraphed Omaha Barracks that a driver on the Salmon City Stage brought word that Green's cavalry "had turned Indians northward towards Big-hole." He further specified that "Ball was at Junction on [the] Salmon Stage road [that] leads off to Virginia City."⁸ Kellogg surmised that "Ball w[ould] head them (the Bannocks) off at Horse Prairie" as "but one other route is left open for them from Big Hole, and that is across the north end of Horse prairie, coming on this road at Red Rock."⁹

Members of the 1878 Hayden expedition also ran into the group of Bannocks. A letter from J.V. Hayden to the Secretary of the Interior on Sept. 1, 1878, recounted the close confrontation:

I have the honor to report that the division of the survey with which I am connected arrived at the Upper Basin on the 26th of August. Soon after our arrival Mr. A.D. Wilson, in charge of the Primary Triangulation, and party came into our camp on foot, having been robbed of their entire outfit, near Henry's Lake [west of Yellowstone Park], on the evening of the 25th by a band of Bannock Indians.

Mr. Wilson had completed his station on the summit of Sawtelle's Peak and the party was in camp sitting around the campfire when the Indians fired into their camp, and at the same time ran off all their animals consisting of 12 mules and 2 horses. Mr. Wilson and party concealed themselves in the bushes until morning then marched to our camp, a distance of about 60 miles. fortunately no one was hurt. Mr. Wilson in the night threw his great Theodolite and Barometer into the bushes, and Saturday he returned with them

⁴ Virginia Cole Trenholm and Maurine Carley, *The Shoshonis: Sentinels of the Rockies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 263-265.

⁵ Thompson, 97-98. Entry for August 8, 1878.

⁶ Thompson, 96-97.

⁷ For information on the Bannock War of 1878, see the flawed but informative work by George F. Brimlow, *The Bannock Indian War of 1878* (Caldwell, Ida.: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1938).

⁸ Letter dated August 26, 1878, from Enclosure, report of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, Assistant Adjutant General, Omaha Barracks, to Assistant Adjutant General, Missouri Div., Sept. 2, 1878. U.S.D.W., A.G.O., Old Records Div., 7337/1878. Citation in Brimlow, 181.

⁹ From Enclosure, report of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Williams, Assistant Adjutant General, Omaha Barracks, to Assistant Adjutant General, Missouri Div., Sept. 2, 1878. U.S.D.W., A.G.O., Old Records Div., 7337/1878. Citation in Brimlow, 181.

safely. The Theodolite was the only object money could not replace and we will soon have him on duty again.

I would respectfully suggest that the Hon. Secretary of the Interior inform the Agents of the Bannocks and give them authority to seize the lost property when they can find it.¹⁰

Two days later (August 27), Captain James Egan located and skirmished with the same group of Indians, capturing 56 stock animals in the engagement. With renewed vigor, the Bannock group moved east into Yellowstone Park.¹¹ The trail long had been a familiar route to them. Avoiding Blackfeet and Flathead territory to the north, Bannock hunting parties would ascend Targhee Pass, ford the Madison and Gardiner Rivers, travel up the Lamar Valley and descend into the Sunlight Basin along the Clark's Fork to the Big Horn Basin to the East. The path afforded sufficient protection from enemies while at the same time providing access to four connecting hunting regions: the Three Forks, Gallatin, Yellowstone, and Shoshone valleys.¹²

During their foray, the Bannock continued to provide a conspicuous presence. Major J. S. Brisbin, from Fort Ellis in Montana, later revealed the temporary panic when he reported that he had stationed himself, thirty soldiers and ten citizens "near Boettlers ranche [Boettlers Ranch in the Paradise Valley, north of Mammoth] and that from that location to Hot Springs" the Bannock had raided all the stock of those they passed, including that from the Hayden expedition.¹³ Colgate Hoyt, traveling with his brother, the Reverend Wayland Hoyt, and other members of Colonel Nelson A. Miles' entourage to visit Yellowstone in the fall of 1878, also noted the heightened fears. The 29-year-old traveler mentioned that Brisbin had camped with them at Mammoth Springs on the Gardiner River.

The company of cavalry and "a larger party of volunteers" was a prudent addition to the touring party as "there were many rumors of the Hostiles being near in great numbers, & fears were entertained of their going down the valley capturing stock and killing all they might meet."¹⁴ Lieutenant William Philo Clark of the 2d U.S. Cavalry, Hoyt reported, had left the remaining group of tourists "two weeks before on the Yellowstone," encountering the Bannock band on August 29 near Index Peak at the head of Rosebud Creek.¹⁵ Clark struck the band again the next morning, reportedly "inflicting some damage upon them" and capturing one prisoner.¹⁶ From their Mammoth Springs encampment, Hoyt and the others would "remain for several days [to wait] for the Gen'l."¹⁷ Indeed, none knew the fate of General Miles nor of the Bannocks that had

already confronted one another on the banks of the Clark's Fork.

Colonel Miles viewed the approaching autumn of 1878 with relief. During this time "active operations were still suspended, as the entire country had been cleared for the second time of hostile Indians."¹⁸ Based at the newly established Fort Keogh at the mouth of the Tongue River, Miles determined to use the period of respite by mixing "military duty with pleasure."¹⁹ The commander organized an expedition "to establish a wagon route and telegraph line west of Fort Keogh, to reconnoitre [sic] the country, and also to visit Yellowstone Park."²⁰ Ten officers and 100 "of the most experienced soldiers" would accompany four civilians, five ladies (including Miles' wife Mary and daughter Cecilia) and two other children on a "leisurely" west-

¹⁰ Letter of J.V. Hayden, U.S. Geologist, to Carl Shurz, Secretary of the Interior, Sept. 1, 1878. U.S.D.I., O.I.A., General Files. Idaho, H 1605/1878.

¹¹ Colonel John Gibbon to Adjutant General, Missouri Div., Sept 1, 1878. U.S.D.W., A.G.O., Old Records, Division., 7309/1878. In Brimlow, 181.

¹² From map in Aubrey L. Haines, *The Bannock Indian Trail* (Bozeman, Mont.: Artcraft Printers, 1964).

¹³ Brimlow, 183. From Gibbon to Assistant Adjutant General, Missouri Div., Sept. 4, 1878.

¹⁴ James S. Brust and Lee H. Whittlesey, "'Roughing It Up the Yellowstone to Wonderland': The Nelson Miles/Colgate Hoyt Party in Yellowstone National Park, September 1878," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 56, (Spring 1996), 58, quotes from the diary of Colgate Hoyt's account of a two-month journey through Yellowstone.

¹⁵ Brust and Whittlesey, 58; Brimlow 182.

¹⁶ Annual Report of the Secretary of War for the Year 1878 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1878), 67; Brust and Whittlesey, 58.

¹⁷ Brust and Whittlesey, 58.

¹⁸ Biographical information about Miles comes from General Nelson A. Miles, *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles Embracing a Brief View of the Civil War or From New England to the Golden Gate and the Story of His Indian Campaigns with Comments on the Exploration, Development and Progress of Our Great Western Empire* (Chicago: The Werner Company, 1896), 294-301; Virginia W. Johnson, *The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962) 212-213; Nelson A. Miles, *Serving the Republic: Memoirs of the Civil and Military Life of Nelson A Miles Lieutenant-General, United States Army* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911), 193-196; Dumas Malone (ed.), *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), 614-616. Reference is to the Nez Perce War of 1877 in which Miles defeated Chief Joseph at the Battle of Bear Paw Mountains. Also, see a biographical sketch of Miles by Robert M. Utley in Paul Andrew Hutton (ed.), *Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 213-227.

¹⁹ Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 192.

²⁰ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 294.

ward journey. Many of the soldiers were members of the 5th Infantry marching band.²¹

Leaving Fort Keogh, the entourage, replete with camp equipage, wagons, pack trains, and saddle horses, sauntered up the Yellowstone River to Rosebud Creek. Miles recalled that this portion of the trip was "a continuous delight."²² Game abounded and the waters of the upper Yellowstone provided ample trout for meals. Riding on a route similar to that taken by the ill-fated General George A. Custer in late June of 1876, the party camped along the Little Bighorn within the shadows of the hill-strewn battlefield, taking time to "examine" the topography of the area.

Within two weeks after leaving Fort Keogh, the party approached Fort Custer, situated on a high bluff between the confluence of the Big Horn and Little Bighorn Rivers.²³ As the group skirted the northern reaches of today's Gallatin National Forest and "neared the Yellowstone Park," Miles received word of the Bannock band heading through the Park. The Indians had raided and were "on the warpath" in Idaho. The colonel believed the invasion "meant devastation to the settlements of our district of country." His later writings reveal no ambiguity as he recalled "I at once prepared to check any such invasion."²⁴

Miles had long since learned not to let an opportunity pass him by, grasping every moment for glory that presented itself. Historian Robert Utley sums up the feisty commander's character by noting that Miles:

was destined to become one of a small handful of successful Indian-fighting generals. . . . A powerful ambition almost unlimited in its ends as well as in its means spurred him time and time again to solid achievement. It also drove him to disparage the achievements and abilities of others, to share laurels with bad grace, and to exploit every influence to advance his fortunes. Coloring the ambition was an acute defensiveness over his lack of a formal education; he had learned by self-study and experience and had risen by merit from the lowly status of Boston crockery clerk to major general and corps commander.²⁵

The Civil War provided Miles with his chance to prove his merit on the battlefield. Wounded numerous times while in command, General Hancock described his actions at Fredericksburg as "most admirable and chivalrous."²⁶ By the end, Miles had participated in all but one of the major campaigns of the war.

The Indian Wars soon became a new theater for the military man to perform. In the 1875 Red River War on the Staked Plains, he campaigned against Cheyennes, Kiowas, and Comanches. Later, he assisted in the wars

against the Sioux in Montana, driving Sitting Bull into Canada while dispersing other bands.

In 1877, he had marched more than 160 miles to intercept Chief Joseph and his band of Nez Perce at the Battle of Bear Paw Mountains.²⁷ The effort followed Chief Joseph's brilliant military feint. Chased by Howard from the west and blocked on the Clark's Fork by Col. Samuel D. Sturgis (from Miles' command), the Nez Perce appeared to move south toward the Stinking Water River (September 8, 1877), while the main body of Indians traveled northward. Humiliated, Sturgis finally realized he had been duped. Catching up with Howard, he awaited the reproach of an angry Colonel Miles.²⁸ One year later, the determined Miles would assume personal direction from the beginning. No subordinates would be provided a chance to bungle the effort. Indeed, Lt. Colonel George P. Buell, post commander of Fort Custer, also received word of the Bannocks and organized a "Bannock Trip" in order to stop the Indian advance. But Miles would leave no time for Buell to catch up.²⁹

On catching word of the approaching Bannocks, Miles considered his options. They would likely leave Yellowstone by one of two passes. "I was obliged," he recalled, "to divide my limited force in order to intercept them at either point."³⁰ Forty men were sent under Lt. Hobart K. Bailey to Boulder Pass, "a very rough and difficult trail,"³¹ flowing to the north above the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone Park. Some thirty others accompanied the non-combatants to "the nearest military post" of Fort Ellis, twenty-two miles away,³² near present-day Bozeman. Miles, with about thirty-five

²¹ Richard Upton (comp. and ed.), *Fort Custer on the Big Horn 1877-1898 its history and personalities as told and pictured by its contemporaries* (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1973), 49-50.

²² Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 295.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Quoted in Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 295. Also, see Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 193.

²⁵ Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 220.

²⁶ Dumas Malone (ed.), *Dictionary of American Biography* XII, 614. Miles was only twenty-six on Oct. 21, 1865, when he gained the rank of major-general of volunteers of the II Army Corps. He commanded some 26,000 officers and volunteers.

²⁷ Malone, 614-615.

²⁸ See Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, Chapter Sixteen, 296-319.

²⁹ Upton, 48-50, 52.

³⁰ Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 193.

³¹ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 295.

³² *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878. Private Sanger's account states that "When within twenty-two miles of Fort Ellis, the general received a dispatch, saying that the hostile Bannocks were moving down Clark's Fork."

men, would backtrack east and attempt a forced march up the Clark's Fork to position his contingent along the more likely travel corridor.³³

The remaining group of some thirty soldiers and officers moved toward the Absarokee (Crow) Agency southeast of Fort Custer. Miles dispatched "scouts" ahead of the force in an attempt to acquire Crow allies and add the military might of numbers to his rapidly dwindling command. Although "friendly with the Bannock Indians," the Crow, in Miles words, "had always been loyal to the government and friendly to the whites."³⁴ The colonel sought to persuade the Crow that the Bannocks intended to plunder their reservation and "neighboring settlements." Other inducements--"food, ammunition, and all the horses they could capture"--would be offered as well. On a mission for military converts, Miles confidently strolled into the agency.

The scouts' initial efforts seemed successful. The Crow informed them that, following the arrival of the command, they would accompany Miles on his journey southward. Upon the colonel's arrival, the Crow warriors cast a confounded gaze toward the small force. With thoughts of the pounding inflicted on the military by the Nez Perce in 1877, the Crow asked when the main command would arrive. Miles replied that his small group comprised the command in its entirety. Although "assured that although this was the only command we had," Miles attempted to persuade the Crow that "it was composed entirely of experienced Indian fighters, that every man in it was a 'medicine' man, and that we needed no greater force than this against the Bannocks."³⁵ The warriors considered the colonel overly optimistic. For the time, he and his men would be on their own.

During this rendezvous, Miles did persuade a Crow named Little Rock to provide intelligence concerning the whereabouts of the Bannock. The enigmatic mixed-blood (likely Crow and French)³⁶ allegedly traveled with the Bannock through Yellowstone. After what historian Bob Edgar describes as a "falling out," Little Rock headed for the Crow reservation.³⁷ Capt. Erasmus Corwin Gilbreath, Commander of Company H of the 11th Infantry at Fort Custer from 1877 to 1882, recalled that Little Rock "had lived with them [the Bannock] for years and had taken his wife from amongst them. After coming through the mountains with them, he had become displeased about something, and had slipped off and reported their coming at the Crow Agency just as General Miles arrived in that vicinity."³⁸ Miles account of Little Rock suggests he met the interpreter at the Crow agency and sent him from there to ascertain the position of the Bannocks. In the colonel's

words, after encountering the roving band, Rock "passed on as if journeying in the same direction from whence they had come until he had gone a safe distance away and then circled around, returned, and reported to me the night before the attack."³⁹ Presumably, Rock was versed in English, Bannock, and Crow. His utility as an interpreter between command and Crow would develop further.

Unsuccessful as a recruiter, the colonel's impulsive tendencies revived and officer and soldier once again headed south along the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone. Within an hour two Crows described as "desperate-looking" approached.⁴⁰ They declared that they did not fear the Bannock and would assist Miles, and the latter noted that "their appearance, words and actions seemed to confirm their professions." The example spawned several more waves of warriors, "the bravest first and the most prudent and timid last," Miles recalled, until 75 warriors filled the ranks.⁴¹ Among the new arrivals were Gray Bull, Big Nose, Little Light, Little Fire, Crazy Crane, Yellow Face, and Gray Blanket.⁴² Miles seemed accurate in describing the new complexion of the entourage: "It then appeared more like an Indian expedition than a march of white soldiers."⁴³

By forced marches (with the officers likely on horseback),⁴⁴ the military and Crows headed south along the Clark's Fork. The group possibly pulled one or two of the wagons they had carried from Fort Keogh. Without the burdens of artillery, they managed to reach Heart

³³ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 295-296; Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 192.

³⁴ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 296. For information regarding Crow service as scouts for the U.S. military during the Indian Wars, see Thomas W. Dunlay, *Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and Auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-1890*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).

³⁵ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 296.

³⁶ In Fred A. Hunt's account, "A Purposeful Picnic," Part III *Pacific Monthly* XIX, (May, 1908), 523-531, Rock is identified as Rocque Barcoume.

³⁷ Jeannie Cook, Lynn Johnson Houze, Bob Edgar, and Paul Fees, *Buffalo Bill's Town in the Rockies: A Pictorial History of Cody, Wyoming* (Virginia Beach, Va.: Donning Company, 1996), 34.

³⁸ Upton, 50.

³⁹ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 299.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Letter, Mardell Plainfeather, Park Ranger, Custer Battlefield National Monument, to Lillian Turner, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, February 7, 1989.

⁴³ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 296.

⁴⁴ The officers and women had ridden on horses during the initial portion of the trip. See Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 295.

Mountain by the afternoon of September 2.⁴⁵ The lightly cedared and pined hills on the northwest side of the bluff provided a perfect view of the long, green-covered Bald Ridge just to the south of the treacherous Clark's Fork Canyon.⁴⁶ A "pocket" in the mountain concealed the soldiers, Crows, horses and pack mules.

Miles ordered a few of the scouts to occupy the crests of the high surrounding buttes. With field glasses and telescopes "under the cover of some cedar or pine bush," they scanned Bald Ridge twelve miles to the west and the long valley floor leading northward where a large bend in the river turned its waters toward Fort Custer.⁴⁷ Until "noon the next day,"⁴⁸ a small contingent of officers, scouts, and Indians searched "with a powerful field glass."⁴⁹ Miles had warned that each time an individual scoped he was "never to reveal as much as the top of his head over the crest unless it was covered by some bush or tall grass."⁵⁰ The effort paid off.

Around eleven o'clock the morning of September 3, a thin line of movement could be seen moving at the top of Bald Ridge some twelve miles to the west. It slowly traversed down a tortuous, rocky path to the valley below. About six miles from the "pocket," the commander and company watched as approximately eighty Bannocks with some 250 horses set up a camp roughly six miles to the north. The location they chose placed them at the confluence of the Little Sand Coulee and the Clark's River.⁵¹

The camp, on a large island just before the northward bend and on the west bank of the river, situated the Bannock in an ideal location for water and adequate defense. To the south, east and west, rolling hills provided a position for lookouts to scan a long, flat plain leading to Heart Mountain. The river had spent millennia carving out sheer cliffs as it meandered round the bend, leaving but a small sliver of incline on its southern end by which it could be ascended. To the west, large sagebrush partially camouflaged the camp and a long hill parallel to the bend in the river, approximately 800 yards away, blinded one's view of the village if looking at it from the plain on the west. Among the sagebrush on the northwest bank, grasses fed by an occasionally spilling river supplied ample forage for the horse herd. Large cottonwood trees also supplied a scattered shade along the banks. Miles recalled the actions of the Bannocks on reaching the campsite:

[They] unsaddled and turned out their horses — quite a large herd — posted their videttes or lookouts on the bluffs immediately adjacent to the camp, built their camp fires, and settled down apparently confident of their safety, and utterly unconscious of the strong command concealed in their vicinity.⁵²



Bald Ridge as viewed from Highway 120

Fearing the often practiced tactic employed by Indians under attack whereby a camp scattered on horseback leaving no substantial trail to follow, Miles demonstrated a surprising amount of restraint while his command waited for evening to close the day. Storm clouds had begun to filter into the sky shadowing the Big Horn Basin. With the cover of night's darkness, Miles ordered his men northward to the vicinity of the camp. Prior to leaving, the colonel issued instructions to his men. "All bits, picket-pins, carbine snaps or other jingling appurtenances" were to be carefully wrapped and stored so as to deaden any sound hinting the approach.⁵³ Fears began to develop among the soldiers as to the odds of an attack on a Bannock camp approxi-

⁴⁵ In *Personal Recollections*, 296, Miles suggests that his command arrived at the base of Heart Mountain "one day in advance of the Bannocks" which implies September 3. However, in *Serving the Republic*, 194, he notes that "we remained until near noon of the next day," which implies an arrival on the 2nd of September. The report of the Battle in the *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878, notes that the command "proceeded to Clark's Fork which they reached on the 2nd of September." I have interpreted the narrative with a Sept. 2 arrival.

⁴⁶ Bronson Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name," Park County Historical Society archives, MS9V-41-4. I agree with Tolman's argument that "the command hid on the northwest side of Heart Mountain, which is about twelve to thirteen miles from the summit of Bald Ridge, while waiting for the first arrival of the Bannocks." The "presence of Cedar or pine would indicate the edge of Heart Mountain rather than Little Sand Coulee."

⁴⁷ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 296.

⁴⁸ Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 194.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 297.

⁵¹ Firearm tag on revolver donated by R. L. Fouse. He found and donated the 1865 Remington from battle site. Collection tag in Buffalo Bill Historical Center describes gun as found "in a gravel bar at the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee." This information discounts later historical assumptions placing the site of the battle farther southwest at Miling Bend.

⁵² Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 297.

⁵³ Fred A. Hunt, "A Purposeful Picnic," Part III, *Pacific Monthly*, XIX (May, 1908), 523.

mately four times greater in number than the soldiers. Without the direct fighting aid of the Crows, who some referred to derogatorily as out only for the "seductiveness of proffered lucre," some soldiers scorned "if we didn't get the Bannocks, they most assuredly would get us."⁵⁴

Crossing to the west bank of the Clark's Fork during the evening of the 3rd, Miles positioned himself near three small hills (Bennett Butte) about two miles to the west of the Indian camp. For a brief time Miles may have attempted to use the elevated hills to reconnoiter the position of the encampment. Through the driving rainstorm, the exact location of the Bannock camp could no longer be ascertained.

Once again Miles solicited the services of the Crow. The first two Crows to join the contingent were selected to find the Bannock encampment and gather intelligence as to the placement of lodges, the horse herd, and band numbers. Cloaked in blankets, the pair wandered through the rain into the camp, "pretending they were Bannocks looking after their horses." Returning a "little after midnight" on the 4th, they reported to Miles. "The Bannocks were in a strong position," and "we [will] get whipped if we [go] in there among the tall sagebrush [described as 'towering above the head of a horse']."⁵⁵ Considering the Crows incompetent as fighters, the soldiers continued to worry about their limited numbers. "It was eminently necessary to use [a] strategy," Fred A. Hunt recalled, "to make reasonably sure that each bullet would find a billet, or that as many possible of the Bannocks should be placed *hors-de-combat* ere the paucity of the attacking force should be ascertained."⁵⁶

Tactically, Miles needed to create the appearance of larger numbers. Calling on Snyder, the bass-drummer of the regimental band with "lungs like bellows of the

village blacksmith," the colonel laid out a plan. When the order for the skirmishers to fire was given, Snyder, who had been provided with brass, was to "blow his bugle vigorously and to rapidly change his musical coign of vantage, so that many buglers would appear to be 'splitting the ear' of day with their melody."⁵⁷ Snyder seemed intent on sticking to the formalities of bugling. As "all soldierly" duties hav[e] their specific trumpet summons," Snyder questioned Miles as to his musical preference. Waving off any particular choice of calls, he bawled out bluntly, "Blow like hell!"⁵⁸

Tactical planning aside, the troops still needed to find the Bannocks. The column "groped [its] way along, not knowing exactly the direction of the camp."⁵⁹ In the blinding torrents of rain and darkness few signals could provide a beacon by which to home in on a particular location. The flat plane seemed lifeless against the thundering sky. Movement would continue for only moments at a time; the entire command would be halted to search for the unknown location of the camp. Finally, "just before daylight" around four in the morning, a golden glow glinted from a distant depression to the East. An early-rising Bannock prepared a fire outside a lodge. The dim hue provided Miles with the target he had been looking for.

⁵⁴ Hunt, 523.

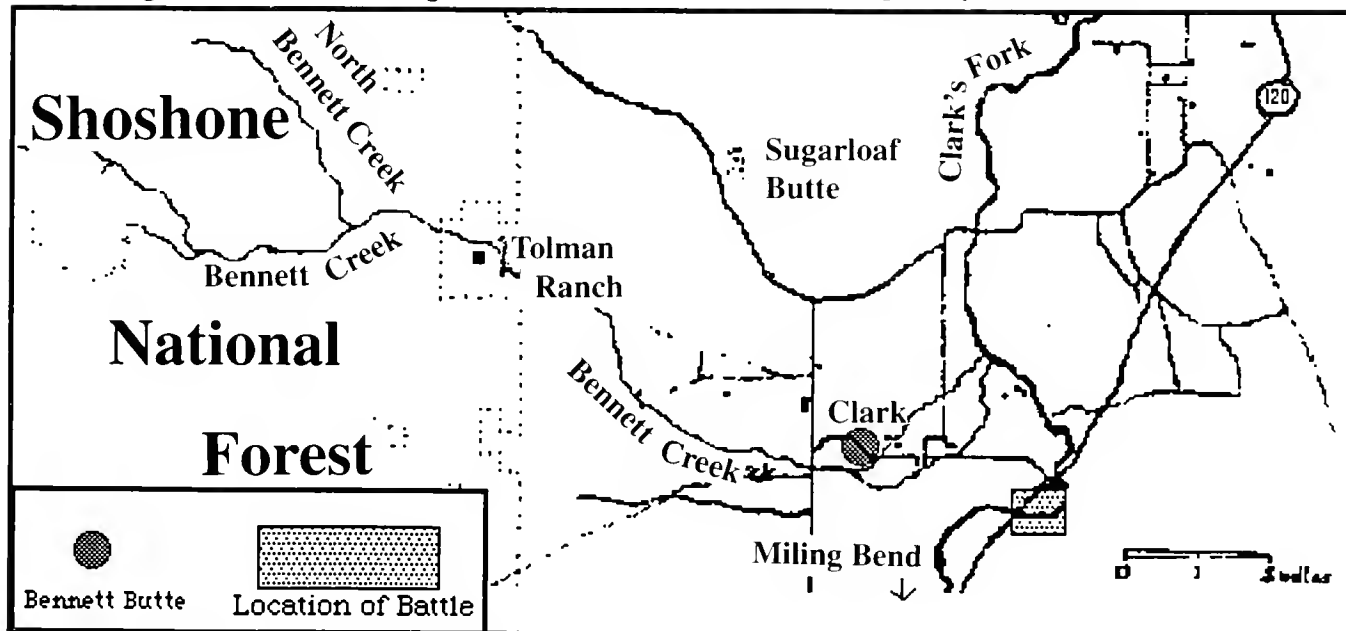
⁵⁵ Miles, *Serving the Republic* 194; Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 297, quote in parentheses from *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

⁵⁶ Hunt, 523. Henry A. Frith, an enlisted man in Captain Gilbreath's Company H traveling with Buell to rendezvous with Miles, reported that he heard others describe that the soldiers "were to fire as quickly as possible and not to take aim, so as to deceive the Indians as to their strength . . ." See Upton, 53.

⁵⁷ Hunt, 523.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Miles, *Serving the Republic*, 194.



After reaching the thin hill angling the Clark's Fork some 800 yards west of the camp, Miles ordered his men to form into a skirmish line under the direction of Capt. Andrew Saydam Bennett. The events to come likely seemed routine for the dashing and adequately mustached 48-year-old Indian War veteran.⁶⁰ Miles placed his full confidence in the fact that Bennett could lead a successful attack on the encampment. Miles wrote about him in January of 1880:

Capt. Andrew S. Bennett, fifth U.S. Infantry, has been an officer of my regiment for years. During the great civil war he served his country with distinction, and enduring all the hardships incident to that long and desperate struggle for human rights, and the maintenance of a just and liberal government. After the war, the fortunes of service placed him on the western frontier where his services have been valuable to the government and to the frontier settlements. He has served in most of the western territories east of the Rocky Mountains, maintaining an honorable record for devotion to his profession, and faithfulness in the discharge of every duty; he was engaged in numerous campaigns and several battles.⁶¹

With Bennett leading the charge, the infantry shifted from a vertical march to a makeshift horizontal skirmish line, unable to see clearly. Miles ordered the Crows to the right flank and instructed all to focus on the flickering fire as the point of attack. Halting several times to adjust to the darkness and re-acquire the light, the command moved silently through the sagebrush. Captain Bennett coaxed his men forward along the right of the line. Entering into the lower plain adjacent to the bend in the river, the troops encountered the Bannock herd. Slowly yet deliberately, the Crows moved to the left of the skirmishers, gathering the herd to the rear.

Closing in, the camp became visible and the "pearly dawn" revealed about twenty lodges nestled on the west bank and the island. The large sage bushes concealed the troops from the unsuspecting, and for the most part still asleep, Bannocks. As the troops neared to 100 yards, Captain Bennett and his men readied themselves.⁶² Miles motioned for Snyder to provide the call.

The "sweet air of early morning" ended with a terse "Fire!" followed by the "crash of twenty-five rifles disturbing the tense and quiet expectancy."⁶³ The portly Snyder ran from one side of the line to the other providing a "pot-pourri of calls" until the "melody expired in a dismal wail" after he tripped over a root. Dropping the bugle, Snyder reached for his gun and "joined in the ping-pong of the fusillade."⁶⁴ Bennett commanded assurances to his men, guiding them forward toward the village.

The stillness of morning shattered as bullets bit into the Bannock lodges. Dismayed, frightened, and yet determined, the Indians did react. Some sprung from their lodges to swim the river, leaving their belongings in an attempt to outrun the gunfire.⁶⁵ Others set up an impromptu defense of desultory fire in the direction of the troops. One of the Bannocks managed to sight in the Crow warrior Two Crows as he worked to capture

⁶⁰ Bronson Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name." Park County Historical Society archives, MS9V-41-4. Tolman notes that Bennett was born February 8, 1830, in Auburn, New York.

⁶¹ Letter from Maj. Gen. N.A. Miles, U.S. A. to Mr. Chas. W. Bennett, Waukesha, Wisconsin. In *Waukesha Freeman*, Feb. 19, 1880, 4. The *Report and Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin* (Madison: David Atwood, State Printer, 1879), 472, notes that "In April, 1861, Andrew S. Bennett was made a Second Lieutenant in the Fifth Wisconsin regiment. He served in action during the Civil War at Williamsburg, Richmond, Antietam, Gettysburg, and the battles of the Wilderness. It seems ironic that Captain Bennett should survive some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War, only to die in an easy morning surprise attack on a small group of sleeping Indians."

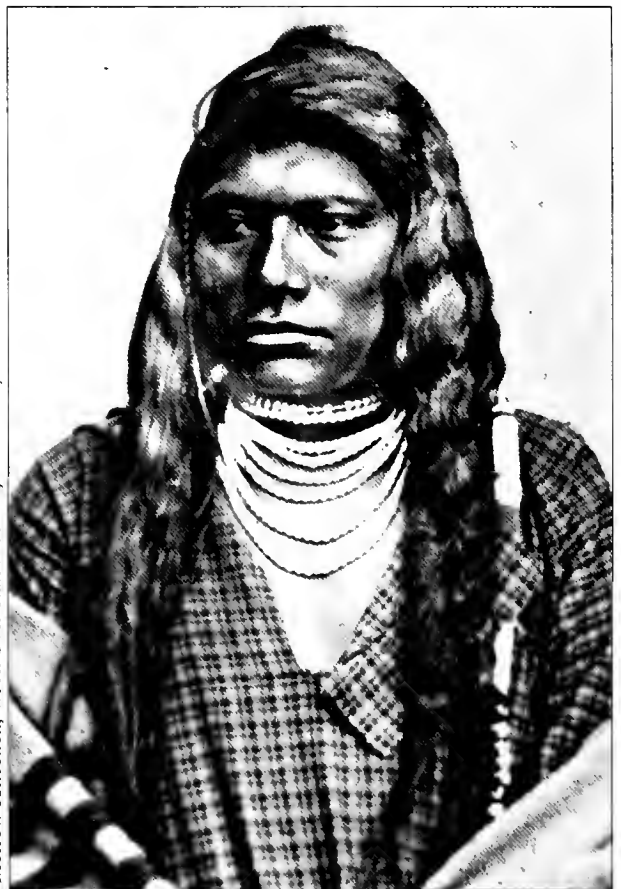
⁶² Hunt notes (page 524) that Bennett, "forming his command of eighteen or so men under cover of the sagebrush, led the charge . . ." This does contradict his later description of "twenty-five rifles."

⁶³ Hunt, 523-524.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 524.

⁶⁵ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 299.

Morrow collection, W. H. Over State Museum, Vermillion, S. D.



Bannock prisoner, Sept. 1878



Bannock prisoners from the "Miles Fight"

a portion of the horse herd, shooting a lead ball into his abdomen.

For about twenty minutes, fire and smoke sparked throughout the village and Miles ordered Bennett to charge the camp. Leading the attack adjacent to the upstream point of the island, "moving on foot from the right to the left of the line," Bennett fell to the ground, a large hole puncturing the center of his chest, exiting below his right shoulder.⁶⁶ Without their captain the troops continued their charge, the fire from their Springfield 45-70's forcing the remaining defenders to furiously ford the river or surrender. Their horse herd removed, eleven of their band dead, and 31 captured, about half of the approximately eighty Bannocks managed to escape within the bluffs of the Little Sand Coulee or among the Cottonwoods along the Clark's Fork.⁶⁷ By six that morning, silence returned to the plain.

Before the fighting had ended, Miles exaggerated that "there was scarcely a Crow Indian, and not a single Bannock horse, to be seen in the valley."⁶⁸ With the booty of battle acquired, as had been their ordered objective, many of the Crows returned to the agency. "Some of them did not stop until they had reached the agency, a distance of seventy-five miles," the Colonel reported, yet others "left their captured stock in the hands of their friends four or five miles back in the foot-hills, and returned to the assistance of the troops."⁶⁹ Many of those that remained aided the soldiers. With

the entire camp, 250 horses, and 32 Bannocks captured, the troops focused on burying the dead, securing the prisoners, and setting up a camp for themselves.

There were wounded on both sides. With numerous Bannocks injured, Dr. Rosten G. Redd attempted to patch up individuals on both sides.⁷⁰ Nothing could revive Captain Bennett nor one other man (described by Frith as a Frenchman and likely a reference to Little Rock).⁷¹ Redd had propped Bennett's body against a tree "with the shoulders bare" to examine the wound and an orderly wiped a bloody froth from the captain's still lips.⁷² Wrapped in a blanket by Private Sanger of Bennett's company, the body was "placed on a horse

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* The quote is from the *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1870. In *Buffalo Bill's Town in the Rockies: A Pictorial History of Cody, Wyoming*, Bob Edgar suggests that Bennett was "on horseback and gave the order to fire into the lodges." However, I have found no evidence to corroborate the assertion.

⁶⁷ *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878. Account of Private Sanger states that "quite as many Indians escaped as were captured."

⁶⁸ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 299.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Hunt inaccurately named the surgeon as Major Henry R. Tilton (p.524). Later he noted that Tilton attended to "all unsurgical wounds." Perhaps Tilton assisted surgeon Redd with the wounded, yet neither Miles or any other accounts refer to Tilton.

⁷¹ Frith, 54.

⁷² Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 300; report of Henry A. Frith in Upton, 53.

and [taken to] the camp three miles away on the stream now called Bennett's Creek in honor of the dead officer."⁷³ It seemed ironic to the soldiers, as it did to Miles, that a "soldier who had risked his life on many a hard-fought battlefield...must meet his death at last."⁷⁴

Another soldier, Private McAtee, also received a wound in the arm, yet would recover. Little Rock, however, met the same fate as Bennett. When the bullets stopped flying, the soldiers realized that he, too, had been killed. Dr. Redd tended to Two Crow's abdominal wound as well. Realizing the warrior would not recover, he injected morphine to deaden the pain. Two Crows died later that day.⁷⁵

Shortly after the morning battle, Lt. Col. Buell's eight troops of cavalry arrived. Capt. Gilbreath reported following Buell with some 40 wagons, 250 pack mules loaded with 350 pounds each, and 50 infantrymen of the 11th's Company H.⁷⁶ Enlisted man Henry A. Frith recalled that as they neared the site, a courier could be seen a mile or more to the west "riding at a lope."⁷⁷ Frith continued:

We did everything possible to attract his attention in order to discover the whereabouts of General Miles; we fixed small arms and hallooed to little purpose; we finally fired off a piece of artillery we had with us, but although he must have heard the racket, he kept his lope and even seemed to increase it. Evidently he had his orders to stop for nothing. I afterwards discovered that the courier was my friend Joe Hart of the 2nd Cavalry with a dispatch from General Miles to telegraph the fight. As we neared the scene of the fight we met one and two Indians, evidently 'Crows,' each driving small bands of captured horses. They too kept going and didn't want any familiarity.⁷⁸

Buell's arrival apparently sparked a heated argument between Miles and Buell. Frith reported:

A soldier told me of a stormy meeting between General [Lt. Col.] Buell and General [Colonel] Miles. Buell complained that couriers from General Miles, that morning and the evening before especially, studiously kept away from his command, and that if the Bannocks had 'taken in' Miles' small command, that he felt sure that he would have been blamed for not getting in time for the fight; that in justice to his command he would make an official report of all the circumstances of the affair. Buell said that he had sent Miles a courier the evening before and that it was his opinion that the whole Indian camp could have been captured without firing a shot and that he would hold General Miles responsible for the death of Captain Bennett.⁷⁹

With the battlefield secured, the last of the prisoners were rounded up. Remaining beside the "rapid, clear, trout stream that came down from the mountains," the command camped in the shadows of the butte during the evening. Two Crows, "a very popular man in the tribe," was laid to rest at the top of its easternmost hill. His body was "bedecked with all the valuables that he had possessed, as well as some belonging to his friends."⁸⁰ Miles also noted that "his body was lifted on the shoulders of four of his comrades, who slowly moved up the side of the butte chanting their sorrow in low, mournful tones, while the other Indians bewailed his loss according to the custom of their people."⁸¹

Fred A. Hunt noted that Rock was buried in the same location: "the Crows had made a shallow grave on the summit of an adjacent hill for the interpreter and the Crow." In that location, he reported, "they were entombed by the superposition of rocks and small boulders, so that a coyote-proof mausoleum was produced."⁸² At least one of the remaining Crows revealed frustration either from the death of a comrade or the inability to capture any horses. "A squaw had been killed," Frith remembered, "who was buried by the soldiers, and dug up by a Crow, who had probably missed the main chance — the horses." This individual later "dug up the dead squaw and dragged her around by a rope at the tail of his horse."⁸³ The soldiers reburied the woman. Other Bannocks were buried along the banks of Bennett creek to the southeast of the butte.⁸⁴

The account of Fred A. Hunt also implies that Buell's main column may not have fully arrived or assisted with the confinement of the prisoners. Camped in the

⁷³ *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878. Bennett Creek runs to the south of the Bennett Butte and Little Rocky Creek drifts to the north of the Butte.

⁷⁴ Miles, 300.

⁷⁵ Hunt, 524.

⁷⁶ Upton, 49. The date of September 7 is reported by Gilbreath as when "I left the post at the same time as the cavalry on September 7, and we camped together at Fly Creek that night." This date would make the arrival on the day of the battle an impossibility — thus the date of September 7 was either mislabeled by Gilbreath or recorded incorrectly by Upton.

⁷⁷ Upton, 52.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Upton, 52-53. Official numbers in "Chronological list of actions, &c., with Indians from January 1 1837, to January, 1891" lists the September 4 battle on the Clark's Fork (Mont.) as 1 Officer killed, 1 Citizen, 2 enlisted men (Little Rock and Two Crows), 11 Bannocks killed and 31 captured.

⁸⁰ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 300.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Hunt, 526.

⁸³ From Frith's account in Upton, 54.

shadows of the butte, Hunt asserted that "our cares [now] commenced, as they [the Bannock prisoners] outnumbered us four to one, and there was no place where they could be confined."⁸⁵ The soldiers instructed the captives, reported by Frith as "mostly squaws and children,"⁸⁶ to sit in a circle around "a mammoth fire." Major John J. Upham, commander at Camp Brown, later reported Ploqua as the Bannock chief among the captured.⁸⁷ A new interpreter, referred to as Cushing, apparently informed the Bannocks that if anyone stood without permission he would be summarily shot.⁸⁸

Numerous "articles of luxury, such as gold pens and jewelry," were taken by the soldiers as the spoils of the battle before they gathered the prisoners around the fire. Private Sanger believed most of these items had "been taken from white men and made a queer contrast with the appearance of their later possessors."⁸⁹ Stripped of their possessions and facing an uncertain future, the captured sat silently before the flickering flames, their faces casting stoic shadows against the trees.

The Bannocks seemed dismayed by their defeat. "I spoke to a young white [perhaps lighter in color but still Bannock] squaw who spoke fairly good English," Frith remembered as he encountered the captives earlier that day, "and she said that had the Indians known that Miles had only 30 men (she didn't consider the Crow scouts) the Indians could have killed them all."⁹⁰

Hunt reported that the doctor continued to tend "all unsurgical wounds; Indians and soldiers alike."⁹¹ He recalled one particular young boy who was suffering from wounds received during the engagement:

He was very badly wounded in half-a-dozen places, notwithstanding which he fought like a wild-cat, biting, scratching and kicking at his captors ere he was taken. Afterward he refused the proffered food and snarled and glowered at the soldiers, so his wounds had to be dressed forcibly while he was under duress. But all the time he never allowed one expression of pain to escape him, although he must have suffered agonizing torments. Yet this boy was quite a pet at Fort Keogh a few months subsequently; the kindness of the soldiers tamed him, as well as many another Indian.⁹²

Prospects proved slightly better for the Bannocks that managed to escape capture along the Clark's Fork. Two groups seem to have gone in opposite directions from the battlefield. One worked its way north, entering the Crow Agency. Although Miles detached Lt. Oscar F. Long with a small contingent to "intercept and capture the escapes [sic]," as Hunt described it, "they [the Bannocks] unquestionably were hospitably received and

... the similarity of appearance between the tribes enabled their undetectable assimilation."⁹³

Miles, his mission complete and his drive for recognition temporarily satisfied, set his sights once again toward the western mountains by which the Bannock had just come.⁹⁴ Although the vacationers mourned the loss of Captain Bennett, the party did not have to contend with any further military campaigning during the trip.⁹⁵ He sent couriers to Lt. Bailey and also to the wagon-train going to Fort Ellis so as to direct the vacationers to plan to rendezvous with him at Mammoth

⁸⁴ Bob Claycomb, a Cody resident who has recovered bone, bullet, and shell fragments, mentioned the removal of a decomposed body (sometime during Sheriff Blackburn's term as Park County Sheriff) from the banks of the river southeast of the Buttes. See Addison Bragg, "Battle Relic Sparked His Interest In Indian Wars," *Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977, in which Fred Vickery noted that the Bannocks were buried "just east of the present cemetery" in Clark. On a "Geologic Map of the Bighorn Basin, Wyoming" by C.A. Fisher, 1905, Bennett Creek, on the north, joins the Little Rocky, on the south, approximately one mile west of the town of Clark. Bennett Creek then flows to the south and east of the butte, joining the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River approximately two miles north of Little Sand Coulee.

⁸⁵ Hunt, 525.

⁸⁶ Upton, 54.

⁸⁷ See Washburn, 242. Upham mistakenly listed the date of the battle as Sept. 5 and also incorrectly stated that "the troops kill[ed] a good many horses — mostly stolen Americans — and all the squaws and children." This assertion prompted many incorrect appraisals of the battle in the 20th century. Upham's source was listed as Dick Washakie's son, "just in from Clark's Fork."

⁸⁸ Hunt, 525.

⁸⁹ *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878.

⁹⁰ Upton, 54.

⁹¹ Hunt, 525.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 526.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 527. Although the Crows fought against the Bannocks in order to acquire horses, the two tribal groups had trade and hunting affiliations. Although cultural differences were surely noticed by the Crow and Bannocks, Indian agents on the Crow reservation likely, as Hunt implies, had a difficult time distinguishing between the two tribes.

⁹⁴ For an account of the vacation to Yellowstone and information pertaining to photographs see James S. Brust and Lee H. Whittlesey, "'Roughing It Up the Yellowstone to Wonderland': The Nelson Miles/Colgate Hoyt Party in Yellowstone National Park, September 1878" *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 56 (Spring 1996), 58. In Virginia W. Johnson's biography of Miles, *The Unregimented General*, she notes on page 213 that Governor Potts of Montana telegraphed Sherman in Washington. In the message the Governor declared "our people are clamorous for Miles to command all Montana troops." Governor Potts to Sherman, Helena, Montana, Sept. 12, 1878. Military Records of Nelson A. Miles.

⁹⁵ Miles biographer Virginia W. Johnson notes that Miles' wife Mary was "visibly shaken" at the news of Bennett's death. See *The Unregimented General*, 213.

Hot Springs. Frith's company under Lt. Col. Buell transported the Bannock captives back to Fort Custer.⁹⁶

Capt. Gilbreath's detachment, waiting five days while Capt. Bennett's body was embalmed and prepared to be transported, camped at the "edge of the mountains and . . . feasted on the most beautiful scenery that I [Gilbreath] have ever seen." After a week, his contingent traveled north through Pryor Gap, passing "old Fort C.F. Smith, which was built near where the Big Horn River comes through the mountains."⁹⁷ Private Sanger and Lt. Woodruff, from Capt. Bennett's company, accompanied his body to Waukesha, Wisconsin.⁹⁸ Ironically, missing the action of the battle, on Gilbreath's return to Fort Custer on September 20, 1878, he commented that the Bannock Campaign was "about as pleasant a campaign as I was ever in."⁹⁹

The same day the *Waukesha Freeman* printed an account of the battle by Private Sanger, October 10, 1878, developments of another kind were taking place at Camp Brown on the Wind River Reservation. Dr. Hayden and his entourage had arrived at the fort, wrapping up a survey of the region. Photographer William Henry Jackson used the opportunity to take some pictures and gather information about the reservation. On October 8, 1878, he reported encountering a familiar character in the region. After the Englishman and a few of his Indian friends "escaped with their hair," Richard Beaver Dick Leigh traveled to Camp Brown. (Pam and Tadpole of the Bannocks would soon become his father and mother-in-law after he married their daughter Susan). Perhaps joining the Bannocks from Fort Hall and the Eastern Shoshones on an annual fall hunt or helping Agent Danilson with continuing intelligence concerning the Bannocks, Jackson described meeting the trapper on August 8, 1878:

Dr. (Hayden) and I go on ahead. Meet Beaver Dick. All Indians away from the post and agency on hunt. Persuade Dick to go into camp with us to be photographed. Leave order for train to camp on Sage Creek. Dr. and I go on to the Post. Get dinner and some provisions for camp and ride back by another route.¹⁰⁰

On October 10, Jackson described photographing "Dick's Indians until noon."¹⁰¹ A day later, however, he spent his time shooting pictures of less enthusiastic subjects. "Photographing Bannock prisoners in the forenoon," the entry for the 11th stated. The prisoners were the last vestiges of Bannock resistance, captured by Lt. Hoel S. Bishop in a brief engagement one month prior.

Lt. Bishop, with a detachment from Company G, had departed from Camp Brown on Sept. 10 after reports filtered in of escapees from the Bennett Butte fight.

Two days after reaching the head of the Big Wind River, a group of the accompanying Shoshones captured seven Bannocks on the Dry Creek tributary.¹⁰² After what

⁹⁶ See Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 300; Upton, 54. Two Stanley J. Morrow photographs on page 51 of Upton supposedly picture the Bannock warriors captured in the Bennett Buttes battle.

⁹⁷ Upton, 54-55, a continuation of Captain Gilbreath's story.

⁹⁸ *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878. Bennett was buried Wednesday, October 9, 1878, under the direction of the Masonic Fraternity. All businesses in Waukesha were closed from 3 to 4 p.m. to observe the service.

⁹⁹ Upton, 55.

¹⁰⁰ Thompson, 105-106.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁰² Thompson, 107. The two engagements were sometimes reported as the same and thus confusion exists as to the exact number captured and killed and the specific location of each battle. See *Official Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians, Lieutenant General P.H. Sheridan Commanding*, which describes Bishop striking "a party of Bannocks on a tributary of the Snake River, Wyoming, kill[ing] one indian and captur[ing] seven, together with eleven horses and three mules: the prisoners had escaped from the fight with Colonel Miles on Clark's Fork, September 4th..."

Morrow collection, W. H. Over State Museum, Vermillion, S. D.



Bannock woman prisoner, photo made at Fort Keogh

some then describe as "a pursuit of two hundred and fifty miles,"¹⁰³ Bishop "overtook and engaged on the 16th"¹⁰⁴ Bannocks on the Buffalo Fork of the Snake River, "twenty miles south of Yellowstone lake."¹⁰⁵ Casualties were reported as two warriors killed, 20 Indians and 14 animals captured.¹⁰⁶ Crow scout Thomas LeForge, who accompanied Bishop, described the encounter:

The Bannock decided to surrender to the troops and they moved in a peaceful manner to do so. Nevertheless, volleys of gun-fire were poured into them and several of them were killed. I remember that one woman had a thigh broken by a bullet. She hid out with her baby but she was discovered, brought into the agency, and cared for until her recovery. It seemed to me the killing of these Indians when it was plainly evident they were trying to surrender was a violation of the humanities. They did not respond to the fire."¹⁰⁷

As the captured Bannocks marched to Camp Brown to be processed, and photographed by Jackson, the "last mountain man of Wyoming" witnessed the end of a war he had watched from its beginning. Those prairie and forest fires that still smoldered in the Tetons and Yellowstone Park would soon be squelched with the coming of rain, winter, a new year, and eventually a new century. Other fires would not simply fade away. They would burn away pages of the record, char over truth, and enter the frenzied fingers of ambitious diarists. The flames would be fanned into a mystery.

Smoke from the soldiers' Springfields had barely begun to lift from the battlefield before myth clouded recollections of events. Some contemporary accounts contain ludicrous assumptions, so touched with the hyperbolic pen that they seem best suited for dime-novels. That many historians have reported such exaggerations as truth magnifies the dilemma, particularly when they consult only one or two sources.

A further issue concerns those who, not finding the "stuff of legends" amid Clark's Fork battle lore, have endeavored to create their own versions of the historical record. In some cases, a universal framework has been established and General Miles merely placed in the milieu. He could just as easily fit the mold of an ambitious Gen. Custer storming across the Washita or a vicious Col. Chivington mowing down droves of innocents along a desolate Sand Creek.

Many researchers studying the Battle of Bennett Butte, when confronted by contradictory or uninteresting information, have relied on another method of inquiry: folklore and legend, or better yet, making something up. Hence, in "new and improved versions," bur-

ied Indians somehow managed to strew themselves across a riverbed, cannons carried themselves from Montana to the battlefield, and a horse suddenly appeared under Captain Bennett as he guided his men in the pre-dawn attack. And finally, shot through the heart and killed "instantly," the captain somehow found time to provide a few heroic last words to his comrades and make funeral arrangements before drifting from a state of total unconsciousness to eternal sleep.¹⁰⁸

Exaggerations and distortions emerged immediately after the event. Frontiersman Finn Burnett reportedly happened upon the battlefield "the day following the massacre."¹⁰⁹ The diary entry for the 5th reads:

The thickets had been blown to bits by cannon shots, and the bodies of squaws and papooses lay with the remains of Bannock warriors amid the wreckage... The path along which the Bannock had fled, was still slippery with blood, proving that they had transported many corpses and wounded soldiers.¹¹⁰

The Burnett account has two problems: the description of cannon destroying the thickets and the description of bodies scattered across the battlefield.

Many "historians" have given credence to Burnett's claims that cannonfire tore the Bannock camp apart on the morning of September 4, 1878. In their book about the trapper Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh, Edith and William Thompson noted that "The soldiers turned a cannon on the 'renegades' and massacred them while the Crow scouts drove away two hundred and fifty of their horses."¹¹¹ Another book follows suit with "while a cannon massacred the hostiles, the Crow scouts drove away 250 of their horses."¹¹² The Archaeological Site Survey Form of an area known as "Miling Bend"¹¹³

¹⁰³ George F. Price (comp.), *Across the Continent with the Fifth Cavalry* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1883), 169.

¹⁰⁴ *The Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians Within the Military Division of the Missouri Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan Commanding*, lists the Bishop engagement as Sept. 12.

¹⁰⁵ Price, 169.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, 107. I have been unable to locate any primary documents that include this citation and thus it must be viewed with some skepticism.

¹⁰⁸ Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name," 4.

¹⁰⁹ Thompson 106. For a biography on Burnett, see Robert Beebe David, *Finn Burnett Frontiersman: The Life and Adventures of an Indian fighter, mail coach driver, miner, pioneer cattleman, participant in the Powder River expedition, survivor of the Hay Field fight, associate of Jim Bridger and Chief Washakie* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1937).

¹¹⁰ Thompson, 106-107.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹¹² Trenholm and Carley, 264.

¹¹³ Also written as "Myling Bend."

also assesses the situation, asserting incorrectly on two accounts that *General Miles* attacked "with canon [sic] at dawn."¹¹⁴

Suspensions must be raised in regard to Burnett's claims. Most notably, no other accounts of the battle, taken from soldier, scout, Indian or non-Indian, report the use of cannon in the engagement. To the contrary, Fred A. Hunt's apprehension prior to the attack had much to do with his doubts that "twenty-five rifles" could take an Indian encampment of some 80 persons. Even Capt. Gilbreath, who reported that he was taking a pack train "across the country to the mouth of Clark's Fork," noted no artillery in his supplies.¹¹⁵

The only account where artillery is described comes from Henry A. Frith, whose company followed Buell to the battlefield. Frith mentioned that at the sight of a courier riding more than a mile away, "we fixed small arms and halloed to little purpose..." until finally the men "fired off a piece of artillery we had with us."¹¹⁶

A second issue concerning cannon stems from the burdens involved in traveling with heavy field pieces. Miles, determined to leave Buell behind and curtail the current of the enemy as quickly as possible, would have been placing himself at a disadvantage by gathering burdensome cannon. Such equipment prevented efficient logistical movement. Furthermore, a command of only 30 men seems unlikely to be toting around large arms and shells. The fact that members of the 5th Infantry (and a few of the 2nd Cavalry) accompanied the colonel, without any artillery units, supports a conclusion that artillery was not used.

Burnett's claims also seem unreasonable when one considers descriptions of the attack on the Bannock encampment. Traveling in the dark amid sagebrush "taller than a horses back," Bennett's men were within 100 yards before the first shot had been fired. For an artillery barrage to begin at such a moment would have placed Miles' own men in tremendous peril. They, too, stood well within the target range.

An artillery scenario limits the role of the Crows involved, too. Capturing the herd of some 250 horses required a close proximity to the encampment as well as a quiet environment up until the point where the horses had been secured and the attack could begin. Had artillery shells burst into the morning darkness before this time, the horses would have likely scattered leaving the Crow empty-handed. Had they come after, Bennett and his men would have found themselves pummeled by "friendly fire."

Burnett's short summary of events shows other faults. He noted that the "bodies of squaws and papooses lay

with the remains of Bannock warriors amid the wreckage."¹¹⁷ Not only does this not fit with the officers' and soldiers' statements regarding burial of the dead, but it does not fit with the location in which some bodies were recovered in the 20th century (near the riverbank of Bennett Creek, south of the Butte). Although not concerned with the medical factors contributing to disease, Miles' men (and Buell's men for more than a week afterward) were camped not two miles from the battlefield. The stench from decaying bodies (all the more so if buried near the butte) would have added impetus to getting the dead beneath the ground as quickly as possible.

Even the last portion of the entry, in which Burnett allegedly saw a "path along which the Bannock had fled" that was "still slippery with blood, proving they had transported many corpses and wounded soldiers [warriors]," presents problems. Foremost, such a "path" filled with Bannocks carrying wounded companions would have provided an easily identifiable trail for Miles' men to follow. On the contrary, Miles reported the difficulty encountered during "mop up" operations as the Bannocks had scattered in various directions very rapidly. Oscar F. Long's detachment, for instance, could not find, nor catch up to, the northern vectored Bannocks fleeing the battlefield.

Most interesting, Burnett failed to mention any soldiers. Certainly Miles command would have been in sight and definitely Buell's troops by the following day. Bennett's death, the Crow scouts, and all soldierly activity remain conspicuously absent from his account. However, as mentioned already, troops remained in the vicinity many days after the engagement, and certainly a frontiersman in the area would have been aware of such ongoing military activity.

All in all, Burnett's story appears to be a grand fabrication. Perhaps the trapper had become familiar with military actions in the past and decided to create a generalized scenario. Perhaps the story emerged as a tale told around a campfire. Whatever the case, the motives that lay beneath the manufactured myth remain a

¹¹⁴ Archaeological Site Survey Form, "Bannock Battlefield," 48PA315 (Sept. 10, 1978). Park County, Wyoming. Site evaluated April, 1981. Investigators: Stuart W. Conner, Dr. Frank Wierzbinski, Denes Istvanffy, Michael Bryant, Aubrey Haines, and Wilber E. Bunn. Informants: Bronson Tolman; Fred and Louise Vickery. Survey contains map of site (Miling Bend), evaluation, one page of field notes (4/25/81), and archaeological site survey form.

¹¹⁵ Upton, 48-50.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

¹¹⁷ Thompson, 106-107.

mystery. Unfortunately, historians have on many occasions taken the trapper at his word, and a distortion in the historical record has resulted.

Writings regarding the battle years later have also tinted perceptions. Word choices have added impact to bullets, illuminating images in the mind of a battle that never was. The use of the word "massacre," as already suggested, tarnishes objectivity. It implies an indiscriminate slaughter reminiscent of Col. Chivington and the "Bloody 3rd's" attack, torture, and mutilation of Cheyennes along Sand Creek in 1864. By the same token the Archaeological Site Survey Form (Sept., 1978) compares Col. Miles to Gen. George A. Custer. Referring to the battlesite, the survey states:

"Here Gen. Miles *pulled* a *Washita* on a sleeping band of hostile Bannocks."¹¹⁸ Such a comment disregards contemporary military tactics in 1878, generalizes a "Sand Creek scenario" into the situation confronted by Col. Miles, and neglects the unique circumstances of the battle. Unlike Cheyenne's camped along Sand Creek in 1864 who were following military procedures and flying a flag of peace (and were attacked by Volunteers, not Regulars), the Bannock band at Bennett Butte had raided on their journey and fell well within military guidelines designating them "hostile." Furthermore, in the Battle of the Washita, Custer and some 800 troopers from the 7th Cavalry attacked fifty-one lodges.¹¹⁹ Miles had no such firepower at Bennett Butte.

The "massacre concept" has taken another strange turn in regard to the battle. Rather than assuming that the Indians were the victims of a bloodthirsty military company, some have turned the tables, manufacturing a fable of a different kind. In this scenario some interpret Burnett's statement pertaining to wounded Indians ("transported many corpses and wounded soldiers") as a reference to dead infantrymen. Ironically, a document from the Wyoming State Archives (11/20/87) which states that "twenty Bannock lodges were attacked and all the women and children killed" also uses this plot.¹²⁰ In Captain Bennett's "valiant attempt to put an end to the Indian outrages," the document describes that he and his men "were outnumbered by the Indians, and consequently were massacred almost to a man."¹²¹ Interestingly, Bennett and not Miles becomes the new "hero" in such a scenario. The noble and "valiant" commander, attempting to "put an end to the Indian outrages in that part of the Big Horn Basin," found the fate of Custer as he endeavored, outnumbered, to attack the Indian village.¹²²

Bennett also takes on the appearance of John Wayne in some depictions. Incapacitated by a lead missile that

penetrated his heart and exited through the right shoulder, most accounts describe Bennett's death as instantaneous. Lt. Oscar F. Long's account in the *Waukesha Freeman* (February 19, 1880) notes that after being "pierced through the heart by the bullet of a ruthless savage," the Captain "lay upon the cold damp ground in a most cheerless mountain country... 'dead on the field of glory.'"¹²³ Yet, referring to the same account, Bronson Tolman's "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name" states that "Army Surgeon Dr. Redd reached him (Bennett) in a few minutes and heard him say he wished to be buried in his home town in Wisconsin."¹²⁴ As in a Hollywood western, a voice has been given to the dead. One wonders if Capt. Bennett would have concurred with the burial arrangements attributed to him.

Such tidbits regarding deathbed speeches, the number of casualties on either side, or the position of historical actors at a particular time seem, on the surface, mere inconsequential details. However, small facts provide vital information in regard to an overall view of the battle. A reference to direction, the flow of a stream, or the descriptions of plant life can lead to a more complete analysis of events. When such minute details are fabricated or thrown in without substantiation, the entire scenario of an event can be turned around. Such has been the case with the Battle of Bennett Butte. Bronson Tolman managed to recognize the significance of Miles' description of his location while viewing the Bannocks descending Bald Ridge. The presence of cedar and pine trees, along with a distance of ten or twelve miles, does indeed indicate a location very close to Heart Mountain.

A description by Lt. O.F. Long in the *Waukesha Freeman* proves to be more difficult to determine.¹²⁵ Long noted that Bennett fell "near the upper end of the island." Tolman interpreted the "upper end" to mean "the right or north end of the skirmish line."¹²⁶ Although

¹¹⁸ Archaeological Site Survey Form.

¹¹⁹ See Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 150-151. Custer's men had trailed some 100 returning warriors, raiding through Kansas settlements, back to Black Kettle's village on the Washita.

¹²⁰ Report of L. Blakesley, State Historical Archives, Nov. 20, 1987. See also Addison Bragg, "Battle Relic Sparked His Interest In Indian Wars," *Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977.

¹²¹ Report of L. Blakesley, State Historical Archives, Nov. 20, 1987.

¹²² Report of L. Blakesley, State Historical Archives, Nov. 20, 1987.

¹²³ *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

¹²⁴ Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name."

¹²⁵ *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

¹²⁶ Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name."

Tolman argues that the soldiers attacked from the west, if Bennett was positioned on the right end of the skirmish line and the northern end of the island, the direction of the attack would have come from the east. Another interesting account comes from Bob Edgar, archaeologist and proprietor of "Old Trail Town" in Cody and co-author of *Buffalo Bill's Town in the Rockies: A Pictorial History of Cody, Wyoming*. In the book, Edgar suggests that "Captain Bennett was on horseback and gave the order to fire into the lodges."¹²⁷

Edgar told this author that Bennett's horse was silhouetted against the rising sun and, thus, made an easy target for the Bannock warriors. Such an account adds to the battle's mysteries. Primary documentation indicates Bennett was "moving on foot from the right to the left of the line."¹²⁸ Furthermore, the sun behind Bennett's back would have placed the beginning of the attack from the east toward the west, a physical impossibility considering descriptions of the battlefield (high cliffs to the east of the river).¹²⁹

Untangling the written record renders only part of the story concerning the Battle of Bennett Butte. Artifacts provide additional clues as to the locations. However, artifactual materials recovered in the vicinity of the butte yield more questions than answers. With almost 120 years stretched between the day of the battle and the present, the integrity of the battle theater is very poor. Coyotes, badgers and other rodents worked their way into rock-covered graves, scattering flesh, bones, and clothing for many miles in every direction. Children also discovered mysterious buttons, bodies, and other trappings. That many of these children have since died, without writing down the whereabouts of their item's removal, leaves few clues as to the location of their findings. In an interview with a reporter from *The Billings Gazette* (6/26/77), Fred Vickery remembered growing up near Bennett Butte:

We used to play around those buttes just east of the present cemetery. There were quite a few bodies up there at one time — Indians, I suppose — but from what I remember there wasn't much left of them. The badgers and prairie dogs had done a pretty good job of disturbing them.¹³⁰

New technologies sparked renewed interest in the battlefield as well. In the twentieth century, amateur archaeologists, arrowhead hunters, and farmers using mechanical plows uncovered an array of artifacts. An 1866 Springfield rifle recovered in the 1920s by a Mr. Lanko, who owned a ranch on Lime Creek, north of Bennett Creek, now is displayed in Bob Edgar's "Old

Trail Town."¹³¹ Unfortunately, no information concerning the removal of the rifle was provided other than "in the vicinity" of Bennett Butte. The only substantiated piece of evidence connecting the battle to a particular location was a Remington New Model Army revolver (.44 caliber) donated to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center by R.L. Fouse. The tag accompanying the donation of the Remington noted "This gun is thought to have been lost in the Battle of Bennett Buttes, near Clark. It was found by R. L. Fouse, in a gravel bar at the mouth of little Sand Coulee. Presented to the Museum by Mr. R. L. Fouse."

Some primary historical evidence links distinct geographic features to particular locations, thus assisting in determining prime artifact locations. The top of the butte in which Little Rock and Two Crows were buried, for instance, seemed a likely spot in which something could be found. Prior to World War II, longtime Cody resident Bob Claycomb uncovered a 45-70 shell casing, two phalanges, two additional bone fragments, and a mini-ball bullet. The phalanges originally were believed to be from one or both of the Crows, and the front-flattened bullet possibly that which killed Little Rock or penetrated Two Crows' stomach. Upon review of the alleged human remains, Dr. Mark Miller of the University of Wyoming noted that the "finger bones" were those of a pronghorn, not a person. Nothing explains the recovery of the spent shell casing from the location, however. The Union Metallic Company casing was not standard military issue in 1878. Might the used (and partially damaged) casing have been on the person of Little Rock or Two Crows when they were buried (perhaps with the intention of being reloaded)? It may have been damaged by one of the rocks placed on top of the bodies during the burial on the southernmost point of the three hills.

One of the most puzzling aspects of Bennett Butte battlefield archaeology (or more aptly "artifact removal") surrounds the mystery of human remains. Despite time, scavengers, and weekend "treasure hunters," bodies were reportedly uncovered, despite Finn Burnett's contention that they were scattered on the banks of the Clark's Fork and left to rot. Yet, where are the bodies now? Many have since disappeared and those responsible for their recovery have either mis-

¹²⁷ Cook, Houze, Edgar, and Fees, 34.

¹²⁸ *Waukesha Freeman*, October 10, 1878.

¹²⁹ See Long's description of the battlefield, *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1878.

¹³⁰ Addison Bragg, "Battle Relic Sparked His Interest In Indian Wars," *The Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977.

¹³¹ Information provided by Bob Edgar.

placed or lost corresponding documentation or in some instances died without leaving any detail. Human artifact evidence must be viewed with some skepticism. Since soldiers apparently buried the dead from the battle in locations other than where the engagement occurred, does the discovery of human remains actually provide an indication as to the battlesite?

A discovery of a body allegedly occurred in 1901. In field notes accompanying the *Archaeological Site Survey Form*, written 4/25/81, one of the investigators (apparently Stuart Conner as indicated by a signature that appears to be "Stu") noted a conversation with longtime Clark resident Elmer Bunn. After searching the Miling Bend area for battle evidence, the notes state:

Elmer showed us basement walls of cobbles of Mylings' house. He said little girl buried on a slight raise south of house but not sure where grave is. His family came to area in 1901. In Elmer's earlier yrs there was a line of Cottonwoods in what's now high sage brush across Clark's Fork from a high Pt Must be a trifle up stream from present trees.¹³²

Where this "little girl" is buried today and whether or not she was connected with the battle, remains a mystery. Another problem with this account stems from the lack of additional graves or bodies. It seems highly improbable that soldiers would have buried one little girl far from the burial spot of the other dead Bannocks. The uncertainty of not knowing "where [the] grave is" only raises additional concerns as to the authenticity and credibility of the account.

Bob Claycomb recalled hearing of an additional "body" being removed "prior to the war [WWII]" from a bank along Bennett Creek immediately south by southeast of the butte. The corpse, allegedly fully adorned, suggested the individual had been a Bannock killed in the engagement and buried after the battle. Claycomb recalled that Park County Sheriff Frank Blackburn, who retired in 1959 following 32 years of service, kept the remains in the vault of the Park County Jail.¹³³ With the demolition of the old jail and vault to provide a parking lot for new police facilities, the human remains vanished, too. The current jailer, Bob Brown, remembered viewing photographs of the remains as they lay within the old vault. However, an investigation for the photographs and accompanying documentation yielded no results.

While indexing the *Cody Enterprise* in the summer of 1997, Park County Historical Society officials uncovered one explanation regarding the bodies recovered by Blackburn. An article titled "Historians Mysti-

fied by Aged Skeletons" in the July 16, 1953, issue concerned Blackburn's recovery of two bodies along the Clark's Fork.¹³⁴ The article reported that the "two sons of William Close" spotted "the fore part of a skull buried in the sand" while fishing along a small island in the river. Blackburn's investigation yielded two incomplete skeletons. "The lower jaw of one skull was missing" the paper noted, yet "thigh bones, vertebrae, hip sockets and rib bones were found." Other fragments were also located, including "materials which looked like leather or part of a raincoat . . . pearl and metal buttons, a cartridge shell, an awl, and an Indian skinning knife made from stone." A "triangular shaped piece of cloth," described as possibly a military insignia, was also recovered beside a rusted belt buckle and cloth.

The *Enterprise* noted that "theories are advanced that they may have been trappers, soldiers, or gold prospectors." Jimmy Allen, described by the paper as "Cody's outstanding Indian authority," believed the two were "wandering trappers who were ambushed by Indians" because a recovered stone skinning knife resembled that "used by Indians as a scalping knife." Allen believed an awl, found "some 40 feet from the site," resembled a type used to shoot fish.

Desiring more substantial answers, Blackburn stated that he intended to contact University of Wyoming paleontologist William Mulloy. Such an examination would likely reveal "whether or not there [were] evidences of scalping, or perhaps provide detailed identification." Bob Witter, a "former Princeton paleontologist who now lives in Cody," did manage to complete a "personal inspection" of the remains. He determined that they "were almost certainly soldiers, most likely members of the cavalry," and they were roughly 25 and 45 years old. The buttons, puttee pieces of leather, and other "Civil war variety items led Witter to conclude that the men died around 1880."

Speculation also concerned the Battle of Bennett Butte. The *Enterprise* reported that the "place where the skeletons were found is about four miles from the Miles Battleground or Bennett Battlefield."¹³⁵ However, there were still Cody residents confident in their assumption that the remains were those of Bennett.

The end of the *Enterprise* article engages in its own speculation. In a fashion Burnett would admire, the article recounts Miles' pursuit of the Bannocks. At this

¹³² Archaeological Site Survey Form, "Bannock Battlefield." Survey contains map of site (Miling Bend), evaluation, one page of field notes (4/25/81), and archaeological site survey form.

¹³³ Cook, Houze, Edgar, and Fees, 143.

¹³⁴ *Cody Enterprise*, July 16, 1953.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

point, it mentions that the Bannocks were camped along Chapman's Bench, a prominent ridge to the southwest of the area known as Miling Bend. With imagination as a source, the story says Bennett climbed to the top of Bennett Butte and fortified its top with "rifle pits" that "may still be seen." Following the ascent, Bennett "ordered his men to fire" on the Indians below.

Such an account is ridiculous. The soldiers would have been some two miles away from the Indian encampment at Little Sand Coulee if situated on the butte. When the location of the two bodies at the mouth of Paint Creek is taken into consideration, they were four miles away. No rifle pits exist or were ever made on the top of the butte. Furthermore, Bennett's men would have been practically invisible in the morning darkness secluded in rifle pits. Yet, the *Enterprise* version of the story has Bennett being shot on the top of butte and then somehow reappearing some four miles away — with a companion no less. Bennett's remains were shipped to Waukesha, Wisconsin, for burial immediately after the battle. Any remains tied to the Bennett Butte fight would be Bannock or Crow.

Other human remains have been recovered recently from the vicinity of the battle. The Wyoming State Crime Lab removed a few remains in the 1980s or 1990s and sent them to osteologist (physical anthropologist) Dr. George Gill at the University of Wyoming. Dr. Gill is currently conducting a review of his findings and will provide a report upon completion. The general location in which the remains were recovered and information regarding genetic characteristics has not been ascertained.

Within the last ten years, Park County Coroner Don Easton recalled that a body had been removed from a bank of the Clark's Fork approximately five or six miles downstream from the Bennett Butte region. Sent to the Smithsonian Institution, investigation revealed the remains to be those of a Native American woman. Easton believed the body had then been shipped back to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody. However, no human remains were ever received from the Smithsonian by that institution. Under current repatriation laws, it is unlikely that any museum would have accepted the remains for storage. Perhaps the body was returned to the Bannock reservation in Idaho? Currently, its whereabouts are unknown.¹³⁶

Other artifacts have provided even more peculiar quandaries. When speaking with the *Billings Gazette* reporter in June of 1977, Fred Vickery, who grew up near Clark, was photographed holding a long bayonet. It had been found by his brother Edward "wedged in

the crotch of a tree," he claimed, after he "returned from a trip up the canyon."¹³⁷ The bayonet entered Bennett Butte legend as an item recovered in "Miling Bend," tied unmistakably to the engagement with the Bannocks. The "Miles Bannock Battle Site Examination" in the *Archaeological Site Survey Form*, written by Kenneth J. Feyhl on May 19, 1981, noted:

Fred Vickery of Billings, Montana told me he knew of military issue buttons and, as I recall, scraps of clothing and blankets being found around the three small buttes on Bennett Creek near the Clark, Wyoming cemetery and two and one half miles from Miling Bend. Also Fred's brother, Edgar Vickery, found what I assume to be a Civil War-vintage bayonet in the crotch of a cottonwood tree in Miling Bend in about the year 1900...¹³⁸

A mistake had been made. Although Edward was killed fighting in France during World War I and, thus, the specifics behind his finding are difficult to determine, other factors weigh heavily against a Bennett Butte connection. At the outset, Fred Vickery's descriptions raise questions. *Billings Gazette* reporter Addison Bragg noted that Fred had "visited the Canyon Creek battle site north of Laurel many times" and "has a few relics to show for it."¹³⁹ Perhaps the bayonet had been recovered at that site. Col. Sturgis, once again pursuing the Nez Perce in 1877 following the loss of the trail farther south at the Clark's Fork, attacked the Indians along the rim rock of Canyon Creek.¹⁴⁰ Fred Vickery's reference to his brother finding the bayonet "from a trip up the canyon" also raises doubts, as both Miling Bend and the bend at Little Sand Coulee are not

¹³⁶ In late December, 1997, Jim Hudson, a former Clark resident, called me regarding a story he had heard about the "mass grave" of Bannocks. He reported he had spoken with several Clark residents over the years who assured him that the Bannock dead had been buried in what is today the southwest corner of the Clark Cemetery. About 1983, Hudson noted that he was shown the "square of sunken ground in the corner of the cemetery." Hudson also notified Randy Thompson, of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Heritage Tribal Office/Cultural Resources, Fort Hall, Idaho. Thompson, a direct descendant of Richard Leigh (Leigh's daughter Emma was his grandfather's mother), expressed interest in the site, suggesting the tribe may investigate it further and, perhaps, be able to locate descendants of the Bannock participants.

¹³⁷ *Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977.

¹³⁸ "Miles-Bannock Battle Site Examination" from *Archaeological Site Survey Form*, "Bannock Battlefield," 48PA315 (Sept. 10, 1978).

¹³⁹ *Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977.

¹⁴⁰ For information concerning the Battle of Canyon Creek, see Utley, *Frontier Regulars*, 310-311.

within a canyon. Maybe Edward's venture took him into the Clark's Fork Canyon (farther west) in which he found an artifact from the campaign against the Nez Perce, or perhaps Fred Vickery incorrectly remembered the bayonet, actually found at Canyon Creek, as located at Miling Bend?

The most interesting aspect of the bayonet find concerns the reference to it as "from an army rifle."¹⁴¹ No military accounts describe the use of bayonets at any time during the attack nor are they mentioned as any of the "appurtenances" in Hunt's recollections. Even Bennett's "charge" seems to have been an "every man for himself" run into the encampment firing Springfields. It was not a fixed-bayonet attack.

Howard Madaus, curator of the Cody Firearms Museum (Buffalo Bill Historical Center), and his assistant, Simeon Stoddard, examined the *Billings Gazette* photograph of Fred Vickery holding the alleged "Army" bayonet. After inspection, both insisted that the bayonet was much too short to fit a Springfield 45-70. Rather, the blade was from a British Martini-Henry rifle. Although manufactured in the early 1870s, such a rifle would not have been used by the U.S. military in 1878. Nor, both argued, was it likely that a Bannock or Crow would have been able to acquire such a weapon because the Canadian government kept close tabs on military issue arms. It is possible, although not probable, that a Bannock may have traded for the weapon while crossing through Idaho. Another oddity exists, however, in the fact that the bayonet was "wedged in the crotch of a tree." Why would a Bannock, Crow, or soldier decide to leave behind a bayonet and nothing else?

While the Remington firearm recovered by R. L. Fouse and items found by Bob Claycomb have provided valuable information as to specific battlefield logistics, other items only raise questions. Disappearing bodies and a bayonet that doesn't fit the circumstances only magnifies the dilemma created by the erosion of memory, reliance on rumor, and loss of persons that do hold the answers to the depredations of time. Perhaps such answers can be found elsewhere? Maybe geographic indicators hold the keys that can unlock a hidden monument guarding, as the *Waukesha Freeman* referred to it, "The bivouac of the dead."¹⁴²

Identifying the precise location of the battle provides the first step toward the creation of a monument commemorating the participants on both sides. Unfortunately, many maps neglect to mention the site, and all miss the mark in pinpointing its location. Ironically, even when a location is correctly labeled, it is often placed in the wrong spot on the map. By reviewing the

historical record, 20th century cartographic attempts to locate the site, and the 1981 Archaeological Survey of the Miling Bend area, geographic clues exist to surmise the location of the battlefield.

The one primary account describing the battlefield appeared in the *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880. Gen. Miles, introducing the description, remarked that Lt. O.F. Long, Acting Engineer Officer, had also provided him with "as good a map as I have been able to obtain of that country" [the battlefield].¹⁴³

Because no map has been identified, the lieutenant's written description provides the sole source regarding the location of the Bennett Battle. Long reflected on his own difficulty determining the position of the site. After noting that the location "is cold, uninteresting, and ordinary," he reported it as "about sixty-five miles from the mouth of the Clark's Fork, in a region which will long remain in comparative obscurity." It "lay in Wyoming not far from the western line in latitude," and he reported the location incorrectly as latitude 44, 45', 30" and longitude 109, 13', 20".¹⁴⁴ "So little is known that even the general course of rivers and ranges indicated on the map [not provided] are only approximately correct," he continued.

The battlefield proper is on the left bank of Clark's Fork. To the west at a distance of eight hundred yards a line of low hills run at a small angle with the river, sloping gently toward it and carried with a loose drift where the grass grows but sparsely. On these low hills was formed the first skirmish line. The bottom land is covered with a heavy growth of sage brush (*artimisia*) [sic] towering above the head of a horse, it affords good protection to a wily foe, and was chosen perhaps for that very purpose. A few cottonwood [sic] trees are scattered at intervals over the battlefield and beyond the sage brush and between it and the river is an island three hundred yards long and half as wide. Opposite the island and on the convex side of the river, the latter has cut the loose incoherent soil and sandstone bluffs about thirty feet in high [sic] and inaccessible present themselves. However, at the lower end of the island, where the river bends, there is a ford where it may be crossed and the top of the bluffs reached. On the island and among the thick sage brush the teepees [sic] of the

¹⁴¹ *Billings Gazette*, June 26, 1977.

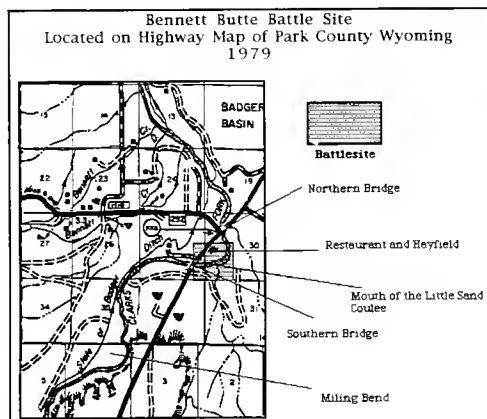
¹⁴² *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

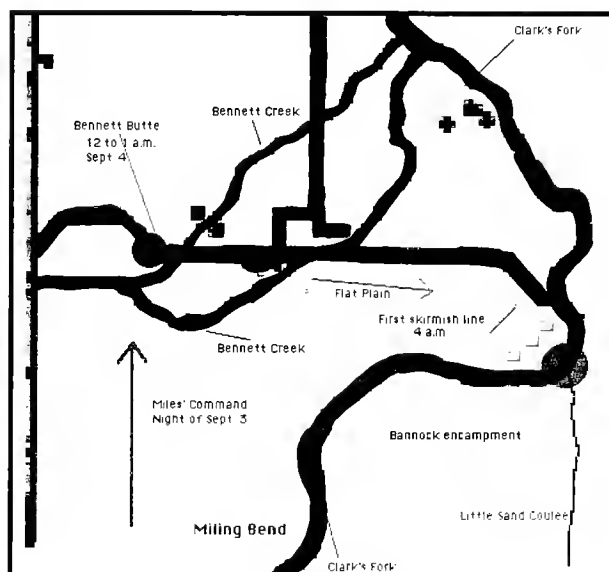
¹⁴⁴ The latitude and longitude provided by Long, Bronson Tolman determined in "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name," "plots five and one half miles south of the Clarks Fork River and one half mile west of Pat O'Hara Creek in high, rough ground," and therefore, it "does not coincide with his description of the site in a bend of the Clarks Fork River."



The ridge on which the first skirmish line was organized.



Map of the battle on the Clark's Fork (left) and detail of the battlesite (right).



Bannocks were placed. Outside of the Indian camp and not a few yards from it in the sage brush, a little column of troops was formed in a second skirmish line. Near the upper end of the island and on this line Capt. Bennett fell, in the execution of his office, encouraging his men to noble deeds.¹⁴⁵

Added to the sketchy description, some official documentation also referred to the location incorrectly. The "Chronological list of actions, &c., with Indians from January 1, 1837, to January, 1891" described the site as "Clark's Fork, Mont."¹⁴⁶

With nothing substantial to guide them, cartographers in the twentieth century have also missed the mark. Some have placed the battle site southeast of the Bennett Buttes (Secs 22 and 23 of T57N, R102W)¹⁴⁷, near what had been the Clark Post Office in 1916.¹⁴⁸ A Department of the Interior Geological Survey Map (date unknown) places the battle in a similar location, confining it to the southeast corner of section 22, immediately northeast of the butte.

Other maps make more egregious mistakes. One unidentified portion from a map displaying county boundaries and physical features of northern Wyoming lists the battle as occurring on the east side of the Clark's

Fork, apparently east of the confluence of the Clark's Fork and Big Sand Coulee. A map *Great Western Indian Fights* even places the battle in the wrong state, locating the site well within Montana.

In many cases, however, the common assumption has been that the battle took place in the area known as "Miling Bend" (Sec. 4 of T56W, R102W), named for a rancher who lived in the region in the early twentieth century. Bronson Tolman noted that "the Bannock camp must have been in this particular spot because this is the only place on the Clarks Fork River that fits all [of O.F. Long's] descriptions."¹⁴⁹

Even Miling Bend, as a map in the April 1997 issue of *Wild West* magazine demonstrates, has not always been accurately defined. This rendition locates the site of the battle at "Myling Bend" yet places the marker

¹⁴⁵ *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

¹⁴⁶ "Chronological list of actions, &c., with Indians from January 1 1837, to January, 1891" lists the September 4 battle on the Clark's Fork (Mont.) with 1 Officer killed, 1 Citizen, 2 enlisted men (Little Rock and Two Crows), 11 Bannocks killed and 31 captured.

¹⁴⁷ In the Park County Historical Archives file pertaining to the battle, one of the documents regards this location as a "potential [historical] site in Park County." Unfortunately, it does not coincide with the location of the battle.

¹⁴⁸ C.H. Scoville, *Park County Gateway to Yellowstone National Park Wyoming* (Map), Ralston, Wyoming, 1916. Park County Historical Society Archives. See also USGS map from June, 1952, of "Shoshone National Forest" which places site in sections 21, 22, and 23.

¹⁴⁹ Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got Its Name."



(Top photo): A view from the hayfield south toward the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee. Note Heart Mountain in the background and the thin ridge to the eastern cliffs at the left.

(Bottom): A view of the battlefield looking northeast as the river bends to the north. Note the high cliffs on the convex side of the river and the remnants of the island.



much too far to the north, leaving the real location completely off the map.¹⁵⁰

Indeed, when identified and located correctly, the Miling Bend site offered enthusiasts the most promise in yielding the actual location of the battle. Without any tangible artifactual evidence, such as the revolver found by Fouse at the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee, the site seemed to fit descriptions perfectly--or a perfect fit could be molded to descriptions. In the end, such reasoning overlooked important clues and, as a frustrated Aubrey Haines evidenced, failed to substantiate Miling Bend as the site.

The lure for archaeological loot from the battle reached a climax in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Convinced that Vickery's account and Tolman's reasoning pointed to the Miling Bend area, Yellowstone Park historian Aubrey Haines, Stuart Conner, Dr. Frank Wierzbinski, Denes Istvanffy, Michael Bryant and Wilber E. (Elmer) Bunn set out to add weight to their "assumptions." In the end, their findings only added to the mystery of the battle. Guided by faulty information and a literal interpretation of the battlefield representations, combined with attempts to make the landscape fit within such limited confines, left the researchers looking in the wrong location.

After "Fehyl & Conner fooled around from 1974 to 1978 to identify the site," it was apparently "finally located" on September 10, 1978. The preliminary *Archaeological Site Survey Form* was completed in April of 1980. It noted the dilemmas already encountered by those trying to pinpoint the battle's location, explaining that the "camp site is located erroneously on U.S.G.S. maps. . . . The maps refer to the site as the Miles Battlefield." Despite such ambiguity, the document asserted confidently that Miling Bend "is the location of the Bannock camp which was attacked by General Nelson A. Miles." Numerous "stone chips" found in the vicinity suggested, if nothing else, that the "location was a camp site in prehistoric times."¹⁵¹ Because no material was collected during the preliminary investigation, the document recommended an intensive ground survey as a next step.

A year later, in April, 1981, the examination moved forward. Kenneth J. Fehyl documented the efforts. As a first task, the team "appraise[d] the relative merits"

¹⁵⁰ Sidne Lynde, "Death Along the Montana-Wyoming Border," *Wild West*, (April, 1997), 60-63. Flawed map on page 63.

¹⁵¹ *Archaeological Site Survey Form*, "Bannock Battlefield," 48PA315 (Sept. 10, 1978).

of the "candidates for the site of the engagement." They employed three metal detectors, scanning the "bulge" west of the river for shell casings, bullets, or other evidence of the engagement. Feyhl noted that "this bulge is somewhat set apart from the Miling Bend area proper not only by the high, dense sagebrush and cottonwoods, but also by a slight swale, extending NE and SW, paralleling the river at the bulge and suggesting that at some time in the past it may have been a river channel." What Feyhl was searching for was a trough indicating a pathway by which the river may have at one time formed the island described in Long's report. In Feyhl's mind, the "situation would have resulted in an island."¹⁵²

Feyhl described the site in 1981. "Most of the Miling Bend bottom now consists of thick deposits of wind-blown silt."¹⁵³ In their appraisal of "other likely bends in the Clarks Fork River," Feyhl contended that "none fit as well as Miling bend." Restating Lt. Long's description of the battlefield, he noted the river's concave bend to the left, the line of low hills 800 yards to the west, the heavy sagebrush and cottonwoods, the description of an island, which in his estimation would have been 1300 feet long and 300 to 400 feet wide, and sandstone cliffs on the convex side of the river. Most curiously, Feyhl pointed out that "the river bends at precisely the lower and of what we assume to be the 'island' and the bluffs can easily be 'reached' from this point."¹⁵⁴ Indeed, at the northern, downriver portion of what could be considered the island, the sandstone cliffs opposite the river end and a small bulge forms on the eastern edge of the river. This forces water to curve to the west around the bulge which forms a natural ramp leading to the top of the eastern bluffs. With the island visualized in this manner, Long's descriptions seem to fit. The small bulge (north end and downriver) bending the river provides a perfect "ford" by which "the top of the bluffs [can be] reached."

When considering Long's report, however, perspective must be taken into account. As he pointed out in the *Waukesha Freeman*, his descriptions were at best "only approximately correct."¹⁵⁵ Despite the fact that Long served as the acting engineering officer for Miles, apparently he had no surveying equipment during the "expedition" against the Bannocks. Furthermore, Long's recollections were presented to the *Waukesha Freeman* more than a year after the battle took place. Reconstructing details of the site from memory and field notes might provide a slightly cloudy portrait of the landscape and events.

Distances and the descriptors provided by Long raise

interesting questions, too. The fact that three small hills have been termed "Bennett Butte" suggests an inherent difficulty in determining precise landmarks. To the west of the Little Sand Coulee site, approximately 800 yards distant, runs a low ridge perhaps twenty feet high. A similar landmark exists at the Miling Bend site. Long's descriptions refer to "low hills" on which the first skirmish line was formed. Considering Long's perspective, in which a small ridge seemed much like a hill shrouding an adequate view of the encampment from the west yet offering the ideal spot to form a skirmish line, the description begins to fit into place. A long, narrow ridge does fit the description of "low hills." One driving toward the Clark Cemetery at the base of Bennett Butte from Highway 120 travels directly through this landmark.

The most troubling conclusion of the 1981 survey involved the search for the "island." As mentioned in the description of the Miling Bend bulge, the team reasoned that a small depression extending southwest from the bulge to the straight portion of the river indicated that water likely traveled between the points at one time. Feyhl's conclusion that the "river bends at precisely the lower and of what we assume to be the 'island'" at which point the bluffs to the east can be reached, presents a problem, however. While the river does indeed bend around the small, downriver bulge at a point where the hypothesized island would have existed, it fails to recognize that Long's descriptions may refer to the larger bulge on the concave (west) side of the river. In Miling Bend, the main bend (on the west [concave] portion of the river) begins near the center of the visualized island (with cliffs on the convex side of the river), not at the exit location of the sage-filled depression (or northern point of the island). If the wind-blown silt deposited opposite the main bulge, not the smaller to the north on the opposite (eastern) side of the river, is taken into consideration and used as a reference for the location of the island's downriver point, cliffs present an impenetrable barrier, not a point where "the top of the bluffs [can be] reached."¹⁵⁶

The survey team's conception of the "bend" of the river fits Long's description only if the larger bulge of the island (the west bank of the island on the convex side of the river) is overlooked and the smaller bulge

¹⁵² All quotes from Kenneth J. Feyhl, "Miles-Bannock Battle Site Examination," April, 1981.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Waukesha Freeman*, February 19, 1880.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

farther north compensated to fit the description. The main larger "bend" in the river occurs long before the downriver (northern) point of the island and smaller bulge.

The survey team "re-appraised" other locations "for several miles upstream and down from Miling Bend" after "no positive evidence could be found in the metal detector survey" and "careful examination could not identify [the island] positively."¹⁵⁷ Despite finding no artifacts (which frustrated Aubrey Haines), and despite the fact that the island could not be positively identified, Feyhl still believed "Miling Bend [was] the scene of the Bannock Battlefield."

The Little Sand Coulee site (southeast sec. 25 and western portion of sec. 30, T57N R101W and R102W) seems never to have been appraised on its own merits. The site does mold nicely in to Long's account, even though a hayfield now covers the west bank along the bend. To the west, the low hills of the first skirmish line, as described before, run "at a small angle with the river." Tall sagebrush does still stand on the east bank as well as untilled portions to the west, with large cottonwoods scattered along the downriver portion of the bend holding tightly to the soil. Steep sandstone cliffs shadow the convex side of the river to the east, broken by the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee to the south looking toward Heart Mountain, and once again emerging on the west bank of the Little Sand Coulee. At the exact point in which the river follows a major bend to the north steep bluffs can be ascended along a thin ridge on the eastern edge of the Little Sand Coulee,

An island also still exists in this location, the remnants of which extends perhaps 800-1,000 feet upriver, beyond the Highway 120 bridge to the west (upriver). The current island ends (downstream) at the precise bend in the river, at which point the ridge lowers from the cliffs toward the Little Sand Coulee. The water level (in June 1997) was extremely high as spring runoff produced flooding along some portions of the Clark's Fork. With less runoff, the island no doubt fills a larger portion of the river. Furthermore, it appears that the river once cut more deeply into the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee, perhaps extending for several hundred feet before forming an oxbow lake and eventually drying up. This island has grown and receded with the currents of the river.

The Little Sand Coulee site also offered a means of escape which the Miling Bend location failed to provide. Col. Miles noted that some of the Bannocks "jumped into the river and swam to the other side."¹⁵⁸ Disoriented by a dawn attack, it seems logical to as-

sume that most people in the same circumstances would attempt to flee in the direction opposite attacking troops, particularly when the number of attacking soldiers was not known. However, considering the number of Bannocks that did escape, the enveloping cliffs of the Miling Bend site would have precluded an effective escape path. Broken sandstone faces and extremely steep ravines border the eastern and southern banks of the river. Crossing the water would have left a Bannock with few options. Only a few of the deep gorges leading to the eastern plateau existed among impenetrable cliffs. These ramps would have been particularly difficult to find in the morning darkness. If a Bannock did manage to find one of these protected pockets on the eastern bank of the river, an ideal location existed to mount a defense. On reaching the plateau, the flat plain likely afforded few options in regard to decent hiding places and, thus, escape would be difficult. One could, have fired from folds in the ravines or along the rim of the plateau east of the river, presumably with impunity. No accounts describe any bullets raining down on the troops from the opposite bank of the river.

At the Little Sand Coulee site, escape routes existed along the ridge to the top of the eastern cliffs, along two draws up the Little Sand Coulee to the south, and along the bluffs to the southwest of the battlefield (still south of the river). Strewn along the mouth of the confluence were additional high sagebrush, providing an escapee with an adequate screen from the sights of the soldiers' Springfield rifles. Jumping into the river from the west bank or from the island toward the east bank makes sense at the Little Sand Coulee site. To capture the fleeing Bannocks, Bennett's men had to cross the river, scour the sagebrush, and search the many hills and gaps along Little Sand Coulee. Such a flight offered numerous escape alternatives and provided many visual barriers by which the Bannock could hide from the soldiers' view.

Another interesting factor in determining the battle site concerns Miles' movement on the night of September 3 and 4. At some point, his troops forded the Clark's Fork in order to reach what would become Bennett Butte. The ford likely occurred to the southwest of Miling Bend, just north and east of a prominent plateau known as Chapman Bench. Despite the driving rainstorm, it seems very likely that if the Bannock encampment rested in Miling Bend, both par-

¹⁵⁷ Kenneth J. Feyhl, "Miles-Bannock Battle Site Examination," April, 1981.

¹⁵⁸ Miles, *Personal Recollections*, 299.

ties would have seen one another. Miles makes no mention of backtracking. The Miling Bend site would have taken him back in the direction from which he had just traveled. The sites near the mouth of Paint Creek (where Blackburn discovered the two bodies in 1952), as well as that near the Clark's Fork bend at Pat O'Hara Creek, are located more than two miles from the butte to the southwest (as noted in Long's description). Both of these locations do not fit descriptions pertaining to the large island nor the "impenetrable" cliffs to the east of the river. A Little Sand Coulee site, with the low ridge on the west, would have been concealed as Miles' command forded the river. Furthermore, homing in on the early morning fire after wandering the flat plain, if at Miling Bend, would have placed Miles' men to the north as they traveled southward from the butte. The attacking force would have come from the north toward the south from which the encampment would have likely been much more easily visible. At the Little Sand Coulee site the attackers would clearly have approached from the west *and* the encampment would have been concealed (as described) by the prominent ridge to the west of the battlefield.

It does not seem surprising that attempts to pinpoint the battle at Miling Bend left the survey team, and Aubrey Haines, in particular, "visibly discouraged."¹⁵⁹ Based on sketchy historical and artifactual evidence, the team followed the assumptions of Tolman and what still seems the most logical location when Long's descriptions are taken into account. With its winding cliffs on the east and large bulge reminiscent of an island long ago and small "bend" at the lower end of the hypothetical island, it seemed to Tolman the "only place on the Clarks Fork River that fits all the descriptions."¹⁵⁹ Perhaps, in the end, Long's original descriptions were faulted. Distances were limited to all but approximations, hills were described as buttes, and long ridges were reduced to "low hills."

Additionally, the Little Sand Coulee site settles into place when descriptions of the battle are taken into consideration. The location of the first skirmish line confirms Miles' difficulty in locating the encampment as he traveled the flat plain. The ridge blocks all view of persons at the mouth of the coulee. The dim glow of a fire would have provided the only indication of a camp situated there. Furthermore, reports of Bannocks fleeing the battlesite suggest easily accessible routes of escape. Miling Bend, confined by cliffs and ravines on its convex side, afforded limited escape possibilities. In the end, lacking artifactual evidence, limited by geographical descriptions, and nullified by the lo-

gistics of the historical record, Miling Bend may not fit Long's descriptions as once presumed. A review of such evidence, although limited by its own faults, strongly suggests that the battle occurred at the mouth of the Little Sand Coulee.

Little did Richard "Beaver Dick" Leigh know that the smoke from the forest fires he watched in 1878 would catch the currents heading east, clouding history into the late twentieth century. The story behind Miles' Fight on the Clark's Fork ended up in much the same shape as Leigh's second homestead, ravaged by floodwaters that swept through the Teton Valley after a dam collapsed in June of 1976. Bits and pieces of information drifted downriver. Most were lost, sinking to unattainable depths or scattered in the abyss of the mighty Pacific. Some of the wreckage, however, drifted ashore or tangled within the roots that held the banks from the floodwaters. From this debris, little was left from which to reconstruct the cabins.

There were, however, some who remembered details as to how each log fit against the other, how fences defined and confined particular geographic features, and the names and faces of those who once traveled in and out of the structure's front door. When the memories faded, some sifted through the scattered remains of an event that once was, uncovering what they claimed were the morsels to solve a developing mystery. With some of the pieces in hand, one vital element remained enigmatic: no foundation could be found.

In the end, a painting emerged of the battle. In some areas, the image is less clear than in others. The names and faces of most of the Bannocks and Crows seem but impressionistic icons while those of the 5th infantry's leadership stand out with sharp detail. Even the background of the painting at times seems lost amid the heavy strokes of a wide brush. It is indeed a work in progress, the final touches of historical and archaeological investigation yet to be delicately applied.

¹⁵⁸ Field notes of Stuart Connor from "Bannock Battlefield Trip to Myling Bend, April 25, 1981.

¹⁵⁹ Tolman, "How Bennett Creek Got It's Name."

Kyle V. Walpole graduated with a master's degree in Western American history from the University of Wyoming in 1998. Focusing on 19th century military and Native American history, he conducted a study of the Bennett Butte battle during an internship with the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, during the summer of 1997. His research led to his master's thesis from which this article is derived. Walpole plans a career in public history.

Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

Voyages of Discovery: Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Edited by James P. Ronda. Helena: Montana Historical Society Press, 1998. xiv + 351 pages. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$45.00; paper, \$19.95.

The historic Lewis and Clark expedition continues to nourish our national pride and frequently provides a historical comparison or commentary with later exploration efforts, including the space program. The expedition celebrates national success, expansion, adventure, cooperation and courage and remains the quintessential exploration epic in our nation's history. Thus an already receptive audience of historians and laymen will be gratified and rewarded in reading James P. Ronda's *Voyages of Discovery*.

Ronda adds his own essays to the contribution of such historian-scholars as John Allen, John Ewers, Albert Furtwangler, Silvio Bedini, Gary Moulton and of course, Bernard DeVoto and Donald Jackson - familiar names to those acquainted with the literature about the expedition. Incorporated into the collection are brief source documents that add tidbits of interest, such as President Jefferson's instructions to Meriwether Lewis, Dr. Benjamin Rush's questions about Native American medicine, morals and religion for Lewis to investigate and Sergeant John Ordway's letter to his parents that expressed his joy at being selected to be "one of them pick'd Men from the army, and I and all the party if we live to Return,"

The essays have been organized into six general categories: Genesis, the Corps of Discovery, The Journey, Mutual Discovery, Homecoming and Looking Back. In essence, the essays examine Jefferson's motives and expectations, the planning and organization of the expedition, the character of the corps, key events and changes during the twenty-eight month, 9,000-mile trek, scientific instruments and their use, relations with Native American peoples and the literary history associated with the expedition.

As a whole, the reading reflects the fertile diversity of research and academic inquiry and emphasizes the complexities surrounding the expedition. In conse-

quence, the Lewis and Clark expedition becomes far more than the dramatic adventure story of two bold leaders and their followers blazing a trail to the Pacific. In fact, the book's title "Voyages" signifies that there were many "explorations" that occurred during the expedition. For Native Americans, it meant the inclusion of a new people and culture into their world view. For the men of the expedition it led to the creation of a community that made its way through a series of other human and botanical communities.

In attempting to explain why Jefferson decided on such an expedition, Ronda asserts that upon reading Alexander Mackenzie's 1801 narrative about his earlier transcontinental treks across Canada, "Jefferson's answer to Mackenzie's initiative, was born at that moment." Ronda likewise emphasizes that Jefferson's written instruction to Captain Lewis, which included scientific and commercial interests, served to define a national strategy that would satisfy the "land hungers and restless energies of a young nation." It is of interest to learn that Jefferson wisely accepted the advice of Attorney General Levi Lincoln to expand the expedition's goals. An expedition with multiple objectives could withstand failure in regards to one pursuit without being labeled a total failure by Jefferson's political enemies.

Geographer John Allen, well known for his writing about the expedition, makes a major contribution with his thought-provoking essays describing the perceived images of the land and available maps on the eve of the expedition; the relationships that developed between the corps and the Indians; and how scholars and the public have viewed the expedition since its return to St. Louis in 1806. In fact, readers may be surprised by Allen's statement that "Looking back upon the Lewis and Clark Expedition after the passage of 160 years, it appears that this pioneer venture into the wilds of the Upper Missouri was much less successful in the field of Indian diplomacy than in the fields of geographical exploration and scientific discovery."

Allen further notes that the expedition failed to fulfill the expectations of the scientific community at that time due to the lack of any substantial scientific re-

ports. Then there was Jefferson's disappointment that the explorers had been unable to find a practical route for commerce across the mountains. Nor was the public clear about the expedition's benefits.

Fortunately, the reputation of the two captains and the expedition has been elevated over time due to the efforts of historians who periodically returned to edit the original journals penned by Nicholas Biddle in 1814. Allen and Ronda's essays trace the evolution of historical writing that reached milestones in the works of Elliott Coues 1893 re-editing of Biddle's work and Reuben Gold Thwaites eight-volume series in 1904. Subsequent historians such as Bernard DeVoto, Donald Jackson and Paul Cutright have added to the record. Gary Moulton's more recent commitment to produce a multi-volume updated series of the journals brings us to the present.

Ronda's book is a reminder that the Lewis and Clark expedition can be studied through the prism of perspectives that encompass an abundance of issues ranging from geographic places and events to personalities and national interests. If the essays serve to expand our appreciation and understanding of the expedition, they also invite further "voyages" of scholarship, and a reexamination of the motives, challenges and consequences of national exploration.

Don Hodgson
Eastern Wyoming College

The Rural West Since World War II. Edited by R. Douglas Hurt. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. x + 258 pages. *Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.* Cloth, \$45; paper, \$25.

This excellent work consists of an editor's introduction and ten scholarly essays. The "rural west" was defined as the "agricultural, small-town and reservation West" (p. 5) of portions of the eleven states between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific. In the four states (Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico) located partially in the Great Plains, the authors were "asked to analyze only those areas that fall within the geographic definition of the Far West" (p. 5).

The authors covered a variety of subjects. In "Native Americans: The Original Rural Westerners," David Rich Lewis concluded that since World War II the descendants of the first people have de-emphasized agriculture in favor of industry, mining, fishing and tour-

ism. But despite this reorientation, he stressed, ruralness, although threatened by technological changes, continues to define their character.

The essays by Paula M. Nelson and Sandra Schackel on rural life and social change and ranch and farm women respectively summarized the sociological change wrought by the rapid adaptation of electricity, gas-powered vehicles, modern highways, telephones, and television. The social and economic implications of ethnic diversity was covered by Anne B.W. Effland, "Migrant and Seasonal Farm Labor in the Far West."

The significant role of the federal government in western agriculture was the greatest concern of Donald J. Pisani and Thomas R. Wessel. In "Federal Water Policy and the Rural West," Pisani described the profound effects of government dams on agricultural irrigation and noted that federal water projects stimulated industry and urbanization as well. In writing on agricultural policy, Wessel covered two main areas - water development and public grasslands.

The other four writings concentrate on the nature and effects of recent changes in agricultural practices and techniques. In analyzing the impact of environmentalism, James E. Sherow noted that some western farmers are cooperating with environmentalists by lessening dependence on pesticides and herbicides and striving to relate agriculture to the total natural world, rather than targeting maximum production. In "Agricultural Science and Technology in the West," Judith Fabry emphasized "systems of technology" involving labor saving machines, specially bred plants and animals and use of chemicals. Mark Friedberger's writing on cattle raising and dairying described, among other things, the revolutionary impact of the shift from grazing to dry-lot feeding. Last, Harry C. McDean in "Agribusiness in the American West" covered the interrelationships of agriculture, national and international trade, banking, food processing and the advent of supermarket chains.

Although each chapter deals with a specific topic, collectively they aptly characterize western agriculture since World War II. Today's rural west as contrasted to that of 1945 has less, but much larger farms, less rural people, less small towns, a much more comfortable and convenient lifestyle, vastly more irrigated farmland, a much heavier reliance on technology and closer economic ties to the nation and the world.

Hurt pointed out that the history of the rural West since 1945 has been neglected by historians. This book should make a significant contribution towards filling that void. All the essays were well-researched, lucidly

and thoughtfully written and copiously documented. Other than furnishing timely information, they should help inspire further studies of the recent and contemporary rural West. This book is highly recommended for anyone interested in the history of agriculture or the development of the post-frontier West.

William E. Lass
Minnesota State University
Mankato

Disease and Medical Care in the Mountain West: Essays on Region, History and Practice.

Edited by Martha L. Hildreth and Bruce T. Moran.
 Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998. xxi + 154 pages. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$39.95.

Health care and the treatment of diseases are serious financial and personal decisions for individuals, groups, and families, and for those who are underinsured, uninsured or seriously ill. The current medical convention that emphasizes hospitals, group practices, specialists, and managed care is differentiated through the study of ailments and health care in **Disease and Medical Care in the Mountain West**. Winner of the 1997 Wilbur S. Shepperson Humanities Book Award from the University of Nevada Press and the Nevada Humanities Committee, the eight essays contained in the volume are drawn from a 1993 conference on regional medicine, health, and health care. Through a diversity of topics and specific studies, the work provides an introduction to the medical history of this geographical region. The volume emphasizes a sense of place, environment, work patterns, and cultural factors in the mountain west's particular medical history instead of examining the diseases themselves and their treatment.

In the introduction and first chapter, the editors and Ronald L. Numbers make the case for using region – whether defined geographically, by nodes of political or social power, culturally, or by disease – as a means of examining the environment and how human culture interacted with it. The editors have also provided a short introduction to the historiography of medical study and how that research has changed from defining diseases by region to diseases having a “scientific universalism,” that is, disease affects everyone in the same manner regardless of locale. The editors also aptly noted that there are numerous other topics awaiting scrutiny and the need to place regional medical studies in the context of the country's larger medical trends.

The remaining seven chapters contain an exceptional breadth of subjects and issues for the region's health care and diseases. In Chapter 2, Thomas J. Wolfe examines the compatible views of self-reliance, virtue, and anti-monopoly held by the Mormons and practitioners of Thomasonian alternative medicine, who used herbs and steam baths to regulate the body. The self-imposed isolation of the Mormons in Utah and a lack of health care workers among them contributed to the acceptance of Thomasonian practice and beliefs extending beyond its length of prominence in the general population. Marie I. Boutte's examination of suicide in White Pine County, Nevada takes a specific locale and region's cultural values of individualism, self-reliance and attitudes toward death as an extension of previous studies that focused on social and economic factors. Diane D. Edward's study of the U.S. Department of the Interior's chronic mishandling and inattention to the members of the Blackfeet Indian Tribe, along with isolation and distance from policy-makers, contributed to harrowing health afflictions. These activities and lack of responsiveness reflected the Department of the Interior's actions on a national level for Native American health. In Chapter 5, Victoria A. Harden examines two diseases that appeared in the twentieth century that had geographical associations – Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and AIDS. Harden argues that location has a larger role in developing social construction of the diseases than the understanding of the disease scientifically. Alan Derickson's essay in Chapter 6 focuses on the application of technology and industrialization in Nevada hardrock mining and miner's silicosis. By utilizing automation techniques, an endemic problem turned into an epidemic that affected 20% or 30,000 miners at any given time from 1900-1925. Economic and political factors such as a pro-mining attitude and lack of a state or local health mechanisms also contributed to the problem, but it was technology – using wet cutting methods instead of dry – that returned the epidemic back into an endemic problem. The mixture of spiritual and practical goals and nurses' education and training came into disharmony in Pierce C. Mullen's analysis of the Methodist Deaconesses of Montana. While providing a “peculiarly American amalgamation of secular philanthropic spirit and traditional practices of the convent” (84-85), their heavy work requirements for nurses' training did not meet the goals of the nurses or their educational institution. In the eighth chapter, Paul D. Buell provides a succinct overview of Chinese medical practice in China and following immigration to the United States. As practiced in America, a cus-

tom of pragmatism and adaptation helped to ensure adherence to traditional approaches while absorbing non-Chinese clients and techniques.

This is an informative and well-crafted volume with illustrative and descriptive essays on the mountain west's medical and epidemiological history. This volume is surprisingly jargon-free and offers a differing approach to medical study of the mountain west. Additional studies and subject-matter can build upon this volume.

Mark Shelstad
University of Wyoming

Tempest Over Teapot Dome: The Story of Albert B. Fall. By David M. Stratton. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. *xiv + 376 pages. Illustrations, bibliographic essay, index. Cloth, \$29.95.*

David H. Stratton has produced a long overdue book about Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall's involvement in the Teapot Dome scandal. While other authors have looked at this story as a conservation issue or another in a long line of Harding administration scandals, Stratton focuses on the man responsible for leasing the Naval Oil Reserves.

In **Tempest Over Teapot Dome** the reader follows Albert Fall as he moved from Tennessee to Texas and back, then to the Territory of New Mexico and mining expeditions south into Mexico. It was during Fall's early years in the Southwest working as a cowboy, miner and lawyer that opinions and attitudes which comprised his character were developed.

After settling in New Mexico, Fall became involved in territorial politics in the 1880s. Though a devout Democrat in his early political career, Fall eventually switched to the Republican party. It was not easy fitting in with a group of individuals he had opposed and fought with for a number of years. Whether a Democrat or a Republican, "Fall had learned how government could be made to serve one's own needs and the special interests of friends" (p. 66). Fall found that he could push through "a personal objective over strong, entrenched opposition" (p. 106). These new-found abilities would lead to his eventual downfall.

Albert Fall stepped onto the national political scene in 1912 when he entered the United States Senate. Fall was a "corporation man" who believed that the West should be developed for the benefit of individuals and the country. This belief brought Fall into conflict with

conservationists like Gifford Pinchot and his followers. This was especially true when Fall accepted the position of Secretary of the Interior following the election of Warren G. Harding to the presidency in 1920.

Stratton states numerous times throughout the book that Fall suffered from financial problems throughout his entire life and he often borrowed money from his industrialist friends. In addition, "Fall's personal ambition and his freewheeling economic philosophy, particularly on the role of private enterprise in resource development, always cloud any assessment of his official actions" (p. 212). This combination and bad timing contributed greatly to Fall's demise.

Though Stratton does not seem to be Fall's apologist, he does point out that there was much more to this issue than a government official selling leases to Doheny and Sinclair, his oil magnate friends. Stratton suggests that had Doheny and Sinclair not loaned Fall any money, the latter would still have awarded them leases on the Naval Oil Reserves. And, had Fall not awarded the leases to his friends, Doheny and Sinclair would still have loaned him money. As the reader follows the developments of Albert Fall's career and philosophical beliefs he/she will see that the leasing of the Naval Oil Reserves by Fall to private industry was inevitable and likely had little or nothing to do with any money he received.

This book is well-written and an easy and interesting read. It will be useful to any student or scholar studying the Teapot Dome incident, New Mexico politics and early twentieth century American political history.

Mike Mackey
Powell, Wyoming

Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth - Century American West. By Hal K. Rothman. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998. *xiv + 434 pages. Photographs, notes, bibliographic essay, index. Cloth, \$34.95*

The "Devil's bargain" is made by local people who live in American tourist destinations. The Devil offers economic growth. In return they get not-so desirable change in local culture and environment. The most obvious of Wyoming's Devil's bargains is Jackson Hole, described by Wyomingites as a place where "the billionaires are pushing out the millionaires." Here neo-natives and part-time residents build "trophy homes" or "starter castles" in the shadow of the Tetons, causing property values and taxes to rise while the less de-

sirable part of the valley floor is littered with the nondescript architecture of chain stores, fast food restaurants and housing for service workers.

Hal Rothman, professor of history at the University of Nevada -Las Vegas, has written a wonderful and monumental piece of history. He plays down his vast research, stating:

The real sources for the study of tourism as recent history are the people and the places where tourism occurs. Conversations and libraries, coffeehouses and archives provided the raw material for this book as much as did books and articles. From Wallowa County, Oregon to Santa Fe and from the coast to Kansas, everyone has a take on tourism. I've tried to reflect as many of those perspectives as I can."(p. 425)

Although Rothman was inspired by his experiences and conversations, his book is the product of deep research not only into general sources on the history of American tourism, but into documents relating to specific tourist sites and communities. In one case (chapter 8, footnote 24) Rothman provides eight sources for one statement. One footnote (chapter 12, footnote 9) contains more lines than the paragraph it is supposed to document. But *Devil's Bargains* is not just a showpiece of scholarly research; it is a fascinating collection of stories about the development of such distinctive Western tourist destinations as Grand Canyon, Santa Fe, Sun Valley, Aspen, Vail, Snowmass, Steamboat and Las Vegas. Rothman chose these places because they were representative of certain genres of tourism.

If you don't trust the film industry to show you how mobsters built Las Vegas, read Rothman's account of how it grew from a mustard seed into a city whose beacon lights flash in the eyes of astronauts in outer space. His tale of Nevada gaming will make your head spin like the drums of a slot machine, the stories of bigger and bigger casinos rolling toward you like cherries. Each period in Las Vegas history, like another heaping plateful at a casino buffet, is almost too rich to digest.

From Depression days forward, tourists were not drawn to Nevada on account of its agriculture or mining historic sites. Today, if historic themes are portrayed at all in the gaming industry -the Comstock Lode display in a Reno casino, for example- they are mere sidebars designed to pump up the casinos' main theme: "You, too, can be rich!" The purpose of these billion-dollar corporations, like other western tourist operations, is to make money and to "give the people what they want," even if the history they sometimes portray

is skewed, or the city's personality becomes warped. But those problems don't faze Las Vegas. The purview of its casinos is the history of the civilized or uncivilized world. In the Great American Desert of southern Nevada, amidst surreal glitter that decorates the "Strip", the visitor can view major landmarks of the New York City skyline compressed into one or two city blocks, gamble in a steel and glass Egyptian temple, observe the holographic Greek god Bacchus in conversation with his mythical peers or stand nearby as an entire pirate ship sinks with its captain below the surface of a pond. But you don't have to go to Nevada to experience the virtual reality of late twentieth century tourism. It is available at the local "splashland" where you can ride artificial waves, in gyms where you can climb rock walls with safety ropes or, if you are less venturesome, in an IMAX theater where you can virtually take part in the ascent of Mt. Everest.

Notwithstanding the excitement he generates in telling about growth and change in the West, Rothman never allows the reader to lose sight of the dark side of tourism or its symbolic meaning in American society. He entreats you to recognize that there is a Devil's bargain in each economic success story. He does not fail to remind you that the success of places like Las Vegas, Disneyland or Branson, Missouri, stems directly from American values. The archetypal representation of postmodern American tourism is Las Vegas, which constantly reinvents itself to provide what late twentieth-century American tourists demand: entertainment with amenities, not physical recreation or intellectual illumination.

It was not always so. In the nineteenth century an elite class of visitors was transported comfortably to places like the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone where they could experience the power of nature. The National Park Service, in collaboration with concessionaires, accommodated their guests, planning the visitor experience in such a way as to reassure them that the nation had the power to control nature for their benefit. Thus, their faith in America's greatness was affirmed. Not until the arrival of the automobile, and particularly after World War II, did tourism become truly democratized. Returning war veterans and middle class Americans had disposable income, and spending it was a symbol of status. Tourism competed with the acquisition of material goods as a status symbol. It also became available to blue-collar workers and their wives and kids, although in a less luxurious form than that experienced by people of means, and travel had to be crammed within the span of a two-week vacation. This is something which the owners of casinos like Circus-

Circus understood well, and they catered to the station wagon and Winnebago-owning masses. Visits to natural and historic sites, formerly *de rigueur* to the traveling upper classes, eventually became commonplace for the masses. The burgeoning American middle class flooded national parks and sites such as Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Bandelier National Monument. Some of the popular tourist attractions were privately owned, such as Carlsbad Caverns. Others—inventions like Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland—had much less intrinsic or accumulated cultural value than government owned and operated sites. Although all of these destinations became available to Americans, tourism was not the same for everybody, and the amenities one could purchase conferred status. For example, although skiing grew in popularity, beginning in the 1950s, most middle class Americans could not afford to buy condos or second homes in Vail or Snowmass. They might rub shoulders with celebrities in Sun Valley and Aspen, but they certainly couldn't afford the celebrity lifestyle.

Students of Wyoming and the West know that much has been written about the history of western mining, particularly the mining of precious metals. They are also aware of books and movies that mine the popular historic themes of associated with the livestock industry or homesteading. Probably they are also aware that tourism is one of the top three industries in Wyoming, but they may not know how or why it got to that position. If you have never given serious thought to how tourism reached its current importance in the American West, you must read Rothman's book. It may surprise you to learn what motivated you to drag your family around the U.S.A for two weeks every summer. On the other hand, you might be, the type of person who doesn't want to read something just because someone says you "should" read it, but if you pick up a copy of this book I promise that you will be entertained as well as educated. *Devil's Bargains* is not only a primer for the history of tourism in the twentieth century American West; it is a study of class in society and the search for status and identity. Best of all, for people who like action, it is a cornucopia of stories about pioneer tourism entrepreneurs.

The problem with the book is the writing style. Although I admire Rothman's storytelling ability and appreciate the way he elaborates his historical hypotheses, building his postulates block by block, I found some of the text redundant and some phrasing ("ponderous stasis," p.255) enigmatic. Occasionally his sentences are unnecessarily complex or clumsy. For example: "'This is how Las Vegas used to be,' comic-

turned pitchman Joe Piscopo, by 1997 a handsome middle-aged man who exuded a charisma that the firm hoped Las Vegas would take as their own self image, affirmed for the Palace Station, the flagship in the chain, 'before the pyramid (at the Luxor, a Circus Circus project that opened in the mid 1990s), before volcanoes,' such as impresario Steve Wynn placed in front of his Mirage Hotel"(p.317).

Despite my notion that Rothman--the editor of the "Development of Western Resources" series in which this book appears--could benefit by utilizing a good editor himself, I recommend this book to every student of western history, to every instructor of those students, to legislators, to chambers of commerce and state, county and municipal planning office officials, and to any other citizen of our state who believes that tourism is a good tool for extricating Wyoming from her late-millennium, economic quagmire. Personally, I look forward to the sequel of this book, which, according to Rothman, will expand his study of tourism to the entire nation.

Mark Junge
Cheyenne

Wind River Adventures: My Life in Frontier Wyoming. By Edward J. Farlow, edited by Loren Jost. Glendo: High Plains Press, 1998. 256 pages. *Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$29.95; paper, \$14.95.*

This collection of anecdotes provides an interesting look at Wyoming during a period of transition from the 1870s through the 1920s. Ed Farlow came to Wyoming as an observant, fifteen-year-old runaway. He married the most popular girl in Lander, a niece of the Sioux chief Gall, and had several children. Farlow's later years were devoted to preserving the history and mythology of the frontier on paper, in museums and through film. This memoir, completed in 1939, is the culmination of that effort. Farlow lived into the atomic age, dying in Lander in 1951.

The story opens with his 1861 birth on an Iowa farm and an impoverished childhood. In 1876 he rode the rails to Wyoming looking for wild west excitement. His first job, on a ranch west of Laramie, was a pungent dose of reality. He was told to pull the wool off carcasses of sheep that had died the previous winter and had been thrown on a shed roof to "ripen up."

Subsequent chapters, not arranged chronologically, record his learning the cowboy trade, trips across the plains and experiences trapping and prospecting. By

1879 he had migrated to the South Pass gold fields. That fall, after the Ute uprising, he walked to Rawlins, took a train back to Iowa and convinced the first of his brothers to come west with him in the spring. They settled and became prominent in Lander. Other chapters include cattle roundups, brand inspections, outlaws, voting, buffalo hunts, President Arthur's visit, putting on Wyoming's first big wild west show and rodeo and the "wolf roundup" of 1917. A fairly reliable eye-witness, Farlow recounts less accurately events which transpired before his arrival.

In the politically incorrect jargon of his time, he tells of working for "squaw man" Jules Lamoreaux, an old time Fort Laramie trader who educated his half-Sioux daughters in such fine schools that they were among the more "cultured" and refined of Lander's citizenry. Farlow was not considered a squaw man when he wed one of these polished girls who even served as president of the Pioneer Association.

Farlow was interested in race relations and sensitive to other cultures during an era when the opposite was typical. He was fascinated by Native Americans, learned some of their languages and became adept at sign language. In one incident, he buried an Indian grave that had been looted by whites. In light of that, his reaction to the 1907 recovery of Harvey Morgan's mutilated skull - he was killed by Sioux in 1870 - is particularly interesting. This discovery prompted Farlow and others to build the Lander Pioneer Museum. Farlow even took the skull with him on a film tour to London.

Among the most important topics in the book is his perspective on the early Wyoming film industry. During the 1920s and 1930s, Farlow worked on several classic Hollywood westerns. Another old-time Lander cowboy, Tim McCoy, had become adjutant general of the Wyoming National Guard and was contracted to provide hundreds of Indians for several films. McCoy hired Farlow, well-known "friend of the Indians" to do the legwork. In his autobiography, McCoy claims the greatest importance in negotiations with the tribes. In this memoir, Farlow claims the same role. Regardless of which ego was correct, both argued for high wages for Indian actors, and filming western movies became a great economic boon to residents at Wind River. Farlow and McCoy supported the Indians' refusal to comply with all the directors' demands, thereby helping them preserve on film certain aspects of their traditional cultures. Not averse to enriching themselves in the process, both men were concerned about the welfare of the Indians on the reservation and on the movie sets.

This book is an interesting, if brief and anecdotal, narrative of Wyoming history. Gaps in the manuscript leave one wanting to know more, particularly considering all that Farlow and his brothers had accomplished. Jost did an excellent job of editing and annotating the original manuscript. The book is well-made and easily readable, no typographical errors were noted and the editor and publisher are to be commended.

Todd Guenther

The Pioneer Museum, Lander

By Grit & Grace Eleven Women Who Shaped the American West. Edited by Glenda Riley and Richard W. Etulain. Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997. xiv+226 pages. *Illustrations, bibliographic essays, index. Paper.*

Scrupulous research and talented writing by established historians combine to make this book of essays an important and welcome addition to the historical record of the Frontier West. The bibliographic essays that follow each chapter will be especially valuable both to researchers of women's history and those with a wider interest.

Some of the stories are well known, others obscure, but all bring new research and details to illuminate the lives of these remarkable women. Each essay carefully establishes the context of the time and place with valuable and often overlooked background information.

For instance, in "La Tules, The Ultimate New Mexican Woman," Janet LaCompte tells us that Mexican women of the mid-nineteenth century could keep their maiden name when they married, along with property rights and access to the courts—much to the disapproval of the Americans of that day.

These memoirs are arranged into two groups: first the easily recognized image-makers, followed by selections about the more obscure women who "devoted their efforts and energies to the refinement and betterment of the American West."

Calamity Jane Canary and Annie Oakley are two of the most recognizable names presented and each played similar roles in creating the myth of the "Western Cowgirl." But there the resemblance ends. Richard T. Etulain's blunt assessment of Calamity Jane as a prostitute and alcoholic may not please some, but the persona created by the florid dime novels remains important in Western Americana. Oakley, by contrast, is almost puritanical, happily married to a partner who honed her skills and stage presence into a legend "that played a major role in the world's great love affair with the West."

Jesse Benton Fremont is included in this group but is she, as Mary Lee Spence, the author of this segment, contends, the "most notable" of this pantheon of "women who shaped the West?"

Of the lesser known women portrayed, Mary Ellen Pleasant is perhaps the most astounding. A black servant woman of obscure origins, she rose to become one of the wealthiest and most powerful people in the quagmire of early San Francisco's financial world.

The reader will also meet Mother Katharine Drexel, a wealthy Chicago socialite who devoted her entire fortune to creating schools for Indian children; and "Iron Eye's Daughters," two Ponca women whose compelling voices for Indian rights resulted in significant reform of Indian policy.

Both Abigail Scott Duniway, a powerful force in the struggle for women's rights and suffrage, and Elinore Pruitt Stewart, as a courageous and optimistic homesteader, will be familiar names to many readers. These

essays, however, add depth and perception to their histories.

Although the collection includes accounts about women from nuns to prostitutes, these women are united here by the commonality of their "admirable grit and an elusive grace" to achieve goals that impacted on the Frontier West in a significant way. According to Glenda Riley, one of the editors, this group is also representative of the breadth and significance of the roles played by all women on the Western frontier, but the book does not bemoan the fate of women in the West or the lack of historical recognition. Instead, it presents these narratives in a straightforward, impartial manner that lets the events speak for themselves.

This very readable book has a brief biography, a "vita" of each author and a detailed, helpful index.

Amy M. Lawrence
Laramie

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

I think that it is imperative that the people who produce your magazine do their best to be accurate. I was surprised when I saw your description "About the Cover artist" explaining the cover picture (*Annals*, Spring, 1998). You quoted a mythological tale about Phillips. This story has been refuted by true historical data which should be reported by your magazine. Read *Powder River Country* by Hanson, pp. 79-81.

Margaret Brock Hanson
Kaycee, Wyoming

Editor:

The cover of the recent *Annals* (Autumn, 1998) was of special interest. With some searching I might discover the identity of the sender of the postcard, but I can identify the recipient. She was Julianna Willson, a first cousin of my father. Her home was Guernsey where her father, Edmund Willson, was foreman many years for Charles Guernsey. He had first worked for Guernsey with the Three 9 outfit on the Cheyenne River north of Lusk. Julianna, as well as her step-brother, my Dad's sister and one of his brothers, attended high school in Salem, Massachusetts, where three "maiden" Willson aunts lived. They felt an Eastern education was important and encouraged this. Julianna's pet name was "Doodie Wissie." Several years ago I first became ac-

quainted with Mrs. Frederick, whose family ultimately bought the Guernsey ranch. I asked if she knew Julianna and she promptly replied, "Doodie Wissie, of course. She and I grew up together." She told me some cute stories about their friendship. Mrs. Frederick also told me that her father was an officer at Fort Laramie in the days when it was an active military post....

Anne Willson Whitehead
Lakewood, Colorado

Editor:

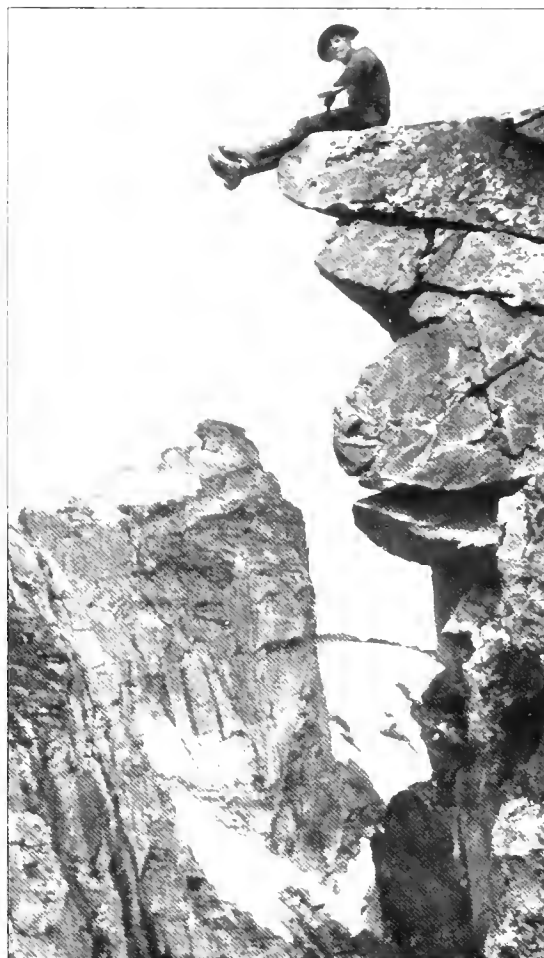
William R. Supernaugh's article "Enigmatic Icon: The Life and Times of Harry Yount," (*Annals*, Spring 1998), includes a photograph on page 28 captioned "Harry Yount in the mountains" and credited to the Yellowstone National Park collection, National Park Service. This photograph was made by William Henry Jackson in 1874 and is titled "North From Berthoud Pass," according to Peter B. Hales in his *William Henry Jackson and the Transformation of the American Landscape*, 1988....

Rick Walters
Photographic Technician
American Heritage Center
University of Wyoming

Wyoming Picture

On the Edge

This early 20th century photograph taken on Mount Owen is from the Fritiof Fryxell collection, American Heritage Center.



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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Spring 1999

Vol. 71, No. 2



About the Cover Art--

The Animal World

1956, film poster (detail)

American Heritage Center, Forrest J. Ackerman Collection

This startling poster advertised the 1956 documentary *The Animal World*. Written and Directed by Irwin Allen (who later became known for such disaster epics as *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *The Towering Inferno*), this film primarily consists of stock footage used to tell the story of the development of life on earth.

The Animal World is most notable, however, for a fifteen-minute sequence on dinosaurs that uses stop-motion animation by two of the greatest special effects artists of the twentieth century, Willis O'Brien and Ray Harryhausen. O'Brien created the special effects for the first of many film versions of Arthur Conan Doyle's novel *The Lost World* (1925), but he is best known for 1933's *King Kong*. Ray Harryhausen animated a dazzling array of creatures for films such as *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* (1953) and *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963).

While the animated dinosaurs in the film are presented in a historically accurate time sequence, the poster follows the common film practice of ignoring scientific accuracy by mixing together dinosaurs of different periods. Thus Wyoming's state dinosaur, the Cretaceous period Triceratops, appears alongside the Jurassic Ceratosaurus and Apatosaurus (formerly, and perhaps more popularly known as Brontosaurus).

This poster, and the dinosaur sequence from the film, will be included in the exhibition *From Como Bluff to Cultural Icon: Our Enduring Fascination with Dinosaurs* at the University of Wyoming Art Museum, June 18 through November 14 (closed September 6 through 24). Organized by the Art Museum and the University of Wyoming Geological Museum in association with the American Heritage Center, *From Como Bluff to Cultural Icon: Our Enduring Fascination with Dinosaurs* presents the history of paleontology in southeastern Wyoming and traces the enduring presence of the dinosaur in popular culture.

Discovered in 1877 by two employees of the Union Pacific Railroad, Como Bluff is one of the most important dinosaur discovery sites in the world. The astounding Jurassic dinosaurs excavated there had a tremendous impact on the development of vertebrate paleontology and provided the core specimens for many of the world's major museums.

From Como Bluff to Cultural Icon marks the 100th Anniversary of the Fossil Fields Expedition, which was organized by Professor Wilbur Knight of the University of Wyoming, and examines earlier dinosaur discoveries at Como Bluff. In addition, the exhibition explores the dinosaurs themselves with two dramatic full-size skeletal casts, actual bones, beautiful late 19th-century lithographs, and 19th and 20th Century paintings that depict Wyoming and its dinosaurs as they might have appeared some 140 million years ago. *From Como Bluff to Cultural Icon* also traces the enduring presence of dinosaurs in popular culture through films, print media, corporate identity, and roadside attractions. For more information, call the museum, 307/766-6622.

--Scott Boberg

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in "Wyoming Memories" also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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Lander's Pride and Joy: The Old Stone Schoolhouse

By Todd Guenther



Fremont County Pioneer Museum photograph

Lander's stone schoolhouse, shining in the morning sunlight, Oct. 8, 1886. Note the construction rubble still littering the grounds, the outhouse at rear, and the lack of any nearby buildings. The school, when built, was just outside town. All of the boys playing with their lariats is no surprise, but the boys and girls playing cricket instead of the great American pastime of baseball is unexpected.

The stone school house at the southwest corner of Sixth and Garfield Streets has played roles of varying significance in Lander's development since the idea to build it was conceived in the early 1880s. It is particularly important for representing the pioneer determination to educate frontier youth in spite of difficulties arising from isolation, lack of capital, dearth of qualified teachers, inadequate facilities, and other problems. Education was seen as a necessity for economic prosperity.

It was also required for the maintenance and dissemination of traditional, east coast, Euro-American socio-cultural values to untutored frontier children and the offspring of immigrants and Native Americans. This wide-spread attitude is illustrated in the Currier and Ives lithograph of Frances Flora Palmer's painting, *Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, by the prominent placement of the public school in the center foreground (*See photograph, next page*). That Lander settlers firmly held the same beliefs is plainly evident in the story of the development of the local educational system and construction and use of the stone schoolhouse.

For a decade following its construction in 1885, the stone school house served as the figurehead of the growing frontier village, proving residents' determination to build a permanent community with a refined and educated citizenry. They were preparing their children for life in the fast-approaching twentieth century. A photo of the year-old school taken in 1886 shows that, although of simple design, considerable artistry and pride were incorporated into the edifice (*facing page*). Later, the school house became the neglected rear wing of a larger building and was recently threatened with demolition. Now, as Lander prepares to enter a new millennium, the stone school is on the verge of reclaiming its former prominence. The stone school will again become a major contributor to the general quality of life and the education of children at the foot of the Wind River Mountains.

When Wyoming became a territory in 1868, the concept of free public education had long been an integral part of American society. A tax-supported public school system was incorporated into Wyoming law by the first territorial legislature in 1869. School taxes could not exceed two mills of the assessed property value within the county. If the county treasurer had insufficient funds, students' parents had to pay the balance. South Pass City, forty miles south of Lander, was home to Wyoming's first public school in 1870. In 1876 school attendance for at least three months per year became compulsory for Wyoming children between the ages of six and twenty-one. This then, was the framework within which Lander pioneers operated as they initiated a local educational system.¹

The stone schoolhouse, which is the embodiment of widely held pioneer philosophies and territorial law, was not the first hall of academe to grace Lander's muddy streets. A history of the earliest educational efforts was provided by the Rev. George Mooney at a school function in 1895:

In 1868 the United States government consummated its treaty with the Indians of this section of this country. One year later a military post known as "Camp Brown" was established on the present site of Lander. The next year the camp changed its location and subsequently became Fort Washakie. A few of the followers of Camp Brown remained behind to establish the town of Lander [known then as Pushroot].

In 1871 Mr. James I. Patten, now a citizen of Lander, was sent as lay missionary and teacher to the Indians of the adjoining reservation. Mr. Patten is thus entitled to the distinction of being the pioneer of education in this part of the State. Remaining among the Indians for a few years, Mr. Patten after resigning his position came to Lander hoping to secure the location of a school at this place. We are informed that the school district to which Lander then belonged extended to Green River where the county superintendent resided. Mr. Patten being notified that he must repair to Green River for examination, took to farming instead.

About 1874 or 1875 Edward Lawn [a saloon keeper better known as Red Cloud] opened the first school in Lander, occupying a building then situated between the Cottage Home hotel and the livery barn. Later, the school moved to a log cabin on the opposite side of Main street.²

The original school acquired by Lawn was a one room log cabin built in the early 1870s (*see illustration, page 17*). After the town was platted and the avenues were laid out, the school was in the middle of the extended and straightened Main Street. To correct the problem, the cabin was moved aside to 556 Main. The building was eventually incorporated into a home and office before being moved away from the business district. It still stands as part of a residence at 991 South Fourth Street. Teachers were barely able to provide the most basic of educations. Amelia Hall, who taught there during the summer of 1878 and simultaneously organized the first Sunday School, wrote:

At the end of the street was a log building used as a school house. I taught school the first summer I was here. I had forty scholars crowded into one small room as every child in Lander attended school, ages ranging from five to sixteen. We had a few homemade benches, a table & chair. The school books were odds & ends

¹ Robert Rosenberg, "Historic Overview of Education in Sublette County, Wyoming," contract report prepared for the Sublette County Certified Local Government Commission, on file, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Cheyenne, 1988.

² "It Was Dedicated Monday," *Fremont Clipper*, November 15, 1895.

gathered from somewhere—no two books alike. The old log building was used until 1885 when the stone school house was built.³

Even in public schools students received instruction in more than just “The Three R’s of Readin,’ Ritin,’ and Rithmetic.” In spite of prescriptions against the mixing of church and state a fourth “R,” religion, was included. Mrs. Hall had written friends and relatives back home in Rodman, New York, that her school had no books and the whole community lacked Bibles and prayer books. More than fifty volumes arrived about a month later, and were distributed among the students and settlers. The Reverend Father Sisson, a Catholic priest and itinerant missionary from Laramie who made periodic visits to the area, held mass in the coarse log school and commended Mrs. Hall for teaching Sunday School.⁴

Not only Lander children attended classes in the little school. Youngsters from outlying areas and ranches were commonly sent to town for “book learning.” Transportation for rural children was a problem then just as it is today. In his day ledger, recording information about his store and ranch operation at the head of Red Canyon, about fifteen miles to the south between Lander and South Pass City, English immigrant William (Boss) Tweed penned these words about his son:

Dec. 18th, 1882 Benjamin Tweed Camenced to go to School at Lander City also to bord at Mr. Davis Hotel at the rait of twenty dollars per month

March 6th [1883] Quit Bording come home on the Seventh on the coach⁵

Fourteen-year-old Ben may have been summoned home to alleviate his parents’ escalating worries about him living and traveling on his own. It had become apparent to everyone in the area that obtaining an education could prove fatal to their children. Only two weeks earlier, widely loved teenager Maggie Sherlock died horribly in an event which traumatized central and western Wyoming. The Tweeds felt her loss personally because the Sherlocks had been friends, neighbors, and business partners since 1868 when both families

³ “90 Year Old Landmark, Once a School, Leaves Main Street,” *Wyoming State Journal*, clipping on file, Pioneer Museum, n.d., summer of 1964; *Wyoming State Journal*, August 26, 1925; “Saloon Men and Gamblers Put Money in Lander Church Fund,” *Wyoming State Journal*, April 16, 1932; Amelia Hall, Mountain View Ranch, May 26th, 1930, untitled manuscript in Pioneer Museum collections.

⁴ “First School House,” *Wyoming State Journal*, May 26, 1938. Sisson performed marriages and other ceremonies during the course of his journeys. For example, he pronounced Jim Smith and the widowed Janet Sherlock man and wife at South Pass City in 1874.

⁵ Tweed Daybook, September 1878-Feb. 1890, 184, in collections of Fremont County Pioneer Museum (unaccessioned).



Fremont County Pioneer Museum

A widely popular Currier and Ives lithograph of Frances Flora Palmer's painting titled “Across the Continent: Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way.” This work depicts “Manifest Destiny” hard at work conquering the boundless horizons of possibility of the American West. Public schools were at front and center of this effort as the picture indicates.

were among the earliest settlers in the adjacent South Pass gold mining region.

Maggie was a stage coach passenger en route from her home in South Pass City to a Catholic boarding school in Salt Lake City. Her coach and several others were caught in a tremendous blizzard in February 1883 and a number of people perished. After two days lying buried in the snow, Maggie's coach was located and she was cut from her frozen clothing and taken to Dry Sandy Stage Station, near present-day Farson, Wyoming. The Reverend John Roberts, an Episcopal missionary who had been a passenger on another coach, was stranded there and helped care for Maggie who was suffering from exposure, dehydration, and frozen limbs. Her driver died before her eyes and was buried in a snowdrift at the station.

Roberts, only recently arrived from a posting in the Bahamas, was headed to the Shoshone Agency at Fort Washakie, near Lander, to establish a mission and Indian school. During the coming years he would also help organize the Lander schools and Lander's Trinity Episcopal Church, plus many other congregations around the region. Had he, too, perished in the storm, both secular and religious education in the Wind River valley would have received a devastating blow.⁶

Maggie lingered in agony for several days before succumbing. Tweed's neighbor, Dr. Wilson, aided by the post surgeon from the fort, tried futilely to help her and afterwards brought firsthand stories of her suffering and the family's misery into the Tweeds' parlor. The Sherlock tragedy resulted simply from wanting a decent education for their daughter. This episode emphasizes the sometimes even fatal difficulties experienced by pioneer families trying to educate their children on the frontier. The deaths and maiming of the many people on the coaches nearly brought an end to stage traffic in the Lander area. On a positive note, it also catalyzed, or at least contributed to, Lander's determination to build a good school system. Parents and civic-minded individuals resolved that local children would not have to continue being shipped off and subjected to such dangers in order to be well educated.⁷

The next year, 1884, Fremont County was created and Lander was named the county seat. The rugged, mountainous area governed was huge, stretching some 250 miles north to south (from Sweetwater County to the Montana border) and extending roughly 120 miles east to west. The first school districts in this vast wilderness were established at that time. In an election on April 22, 1884, James I. Patten was chosen as the first County Superintendent of Schools. During his brief tenure a total school apportionment of \$3500 was di-

vided among eight school districts. District One at Lander, with \$1003.65, had by far the greatest single share.

Lander, as the seat of county government, with a mild climate and rich natural resources, grew steadily in spite of its remote, isolated location 150 miles from the Union Pacific Railroad. Still, it was at this time a rough, frontier town with frequent gunplay in the muddy streets lined with numerous log saloons and other simple buildings; Lander had a long way to go to become the model community local visionaries foresaw. Work toward that end was progressing rapidly, though, and significant changes are visible in photographic views of the town taken only a few years apart in 1883 and about 1887 (*following page*). One of the first steps to be addressed was the pressing need for adequate educational facilities to enlighten the young already living there and to attract more families of respectable character. According to the *Wind River Mountaineer*, January 1, 1885:

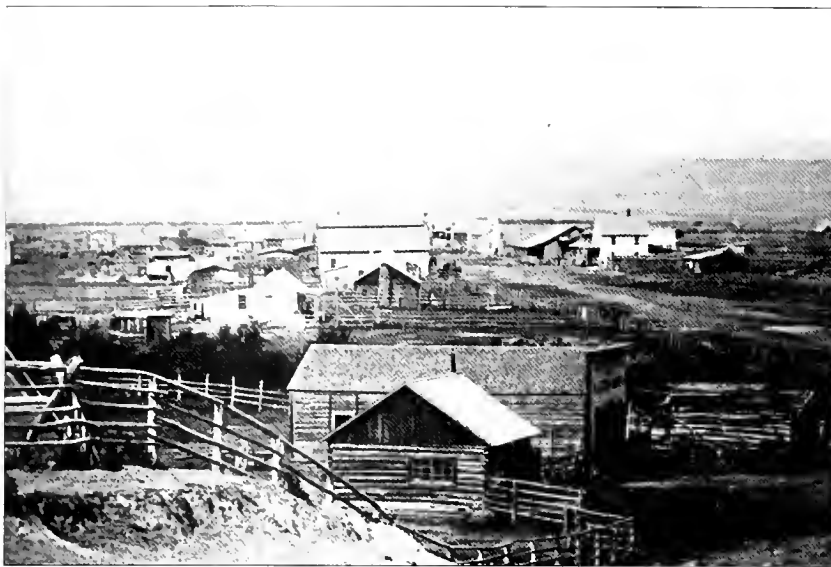
Lander is improving. Already she boasts of fine stone buildings, and the adobe and log houses are fast giving place to more substantial structures of stone and framed buildings... In order to keep pace with the times, a new, and commodious school house is much needed here ...

Patten, who served as superintendent only until January of 1885, initiated the planning and fund-raising efforts to upgrade the school system. The site selected for the new school was a 150' by 150' parcel consisting of Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 28 in the Original Townsite of Lander. The land may have been purchased for the project, but was most likely donated by early-day Pony Express rider and Indian fighter Benjamin Franklin Lowe, Italian immigrant banker Eugene Amoretti, and the other men who laid out the town. They donated land for several churches and the courthouse. A gift of land to build the school would have been in keeping with their efforts to create a model community. Patten enjoyed the pleasure of initiating construction of the new facility before his term expired.

Exactly how construction of the expensive new stone school building was funded was not recorded. Donations from the public clearly paid at least part if not all

⁶ Tom Bell, "Roberts Was Elder Brother To All," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 3 (April - June 1987):4-24; Elinor R. Markley and Beatrice Crofts, eds., *Walk Softly This Is God's Country: Letters and Journals of Rev. John Roberts* (Lander, Wyoming: Mortimore Publishing, 1997).

⁷ Todd Guenther, editor, "Dear Peter: The Letters of a Pioneer Mother and Sister," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 7 (April - June 1991): 23-27; Tom Bell, "The Terrible Blizzard of 1883," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 4 (January - March 1988): 4-11.



Fremont County Pioneer Museum

View to the west along Main Street, taken from the hill near the present-day Pronghorn Lodge. The photo was taken in 1883, possibly by a photographer associated with President Chester A. Arthur's sojourn through the area on his way to Yellowstone. Ervin Cheney's blacksmith shop is the large, false-fronted log building in the foreground. The rear of the stone, Catholic Church is visible at the middle left edge of the photo.



Wyoming Cultural Resources Division

This c. 1887 photo, taken from a slightly different angle, shows several developments. New homes and the stone schoolhouse are in the area beyond the Catholic Church. Downtown, some large commercial buildings have been built to accommodate the growing retail sector. These include the 1887 Fremont Lumber Company building (shown at right, the four second-story windows facing the camera looked out from the Fremont Clipper offices). The large brick building to the left of that was the Odd Fellows Hall, built in 1886. The first floor was leased to a succession of commercial ventures.

of the costs. There was at this time in Lander's early history a great deal of competition for funds to build several large edifices. The cumulative results of these drives bespeak the determination of early settlers, all relatively recent arrivals to the new town, to shape their community for the best. The repeated displays of generosity and volunteers' consistent ability to raise significant sums of money through public subscriptions from a small, cash strapped frontier community were nothing short of remarkable.

The Catholic church, built of stone by a man named McLimans two years before the school, provides a good example both of the fundraisers' success and building costs associated with a structure like the school. During December 1882, a three-day benefit fair was held which raised \$1,812. There were only about 100 people in the village at that time, and the average daily wage was only one to two dollars, so the results are astonish-

ing. The church, about half the size of the school, was completed in the spring of 1883. The total cost was about \$3,000 and the congregation was nearly free of debt due to the generosity of Lander citizenry.⁸

Simultaneous fundraising efforts for Trinity Episcopal Church are better documented. Lander residents were forced to contribute money to erect both structures. All locals were expected to dig deeply into their pockets to support these ventures. Fund-raiser H. E. Wadsworth described the process of soliciting donations. He also introduced Jack Parker, who ran a notorious saloon and outlaw hangout but nevertheless played a prominent role in efforts to raise money first for the Sunday school and later the public school bell:

⁸ "The History of Lander and of Holy Rosary Parish," unpublished manuscript, n.d., on file at Pioneer Museum, 38, 39; "Catholic Church Was First Built Says E.J. Farlow," *Wyoming State Journal*, n.d., clipping on file, Pioneer Museum.

As a member of the committee for the raising of such funds, I was courteously received by all members of the gambling fraternity, saloon keepers, and representatives of even more shady lines of business, all contributing generously, regardless of creed or the lack of it. I remember that old "Black Jack Parker," who had one of the best-known saloons and gambling places in town, located on Main street, opposite the old Lander hotel, was very enthusiastic about the new church, and subscribed his name gladly, with a few characteristic, profane remarks.⁹

Parker's saloon was the site of frequent violence and wasn't really a very funny place. A local man, who brought his wife and children to Lander in 1882, made a diary entry which underscores what a tough, "Old West" type of institution Parker's saloon was: "Aug 15 1885 this evening about 5:30 Oclock Frank Howard shot and kild Charley Williamson in Jack Parkers Soloune."¹⁰

Children who grew up in this section of the frontier and attended classes in the Lander school were familiar with violence in its crudest forms. In 1873, two years after Ed Lawn opened Lander's first public school, the village was attacked by the Sioux and two women were killed in a cabin only two blocks from the school. "Indian scares" remained a part of daily life for many years. The tribes had generally been confined to reservations and peace had prevailed in the Lander area since the late 1870s—Fort Stambaugh near South Pass City was deemed unnecessary and closed in 1878—but people still lived with apprehension. The feeling of physical safety inspired by thick stone walls may have been a contributing factor in Landerites' selection of that building material. The intent in building the school was to overcome the rough frontier life-style both mentally and physically: to keep children safe, to educate them, and to provide them with a more uplifting built environment, thereby creating a more civilized community.

A mother and daughter who survived the desperate warfare of the 1860s and 1870s noted another series of frightening events that affected Lander area children at the relatively late date of 1882,

May 12th, 1882. We have had quite an Indian scare lately. I do not know whither the Indians have settled down yet or not. I think the [soldiers] did perfectly right in killing Captain Jack. He was here for the purpose of trying to get the Young Bucks to join him to fight the whites and he was one of the instagators [sic] of the Meeker Massacre.

May 14th, 1882. [Twelve year old] John went to the [Lander] valley with Billcox. He was going to be gone a week or ten day[s] and instead of that did not come

back for three weeks ... We were awful uneasy about him on account of the Indians being so bad ...¹¹

Fear and death in street fights, skirmishes, diseases, or accidents were part of growing up on the frontier.

⁹ Christine Fuller, Superintendent of Schools, Fremont County, Lander, Wyoming, (unpublished manuscript on file, Pioneer Museum, 1965); "Trinity Church, Lander, 1883-1983," 2; H. E. Wadsworth, "Saloon Men and Gamblers Put Money in Lander Church Fund," *Wyoming State Journal*, April 16, 1932.

Parker sold his saloon in the 200 block of Main Street to Edward Lannigan in the late 1880s or early 1890s. With son Joe behind the bar, the Lannigan saloon remained a lively and tough frontier bar. It continued to be a prominent institution in downtown Lander during an era when all normal men were expected to imbibe freely. The omnipresent Butch Cassidy was once enjoying a peaceful drink or three when warned by a fellow patron that the sheriff was coming to arrest him. Butch preserved his freedom by fleeing through the back door.

In 1893 Tom Shephard, alias Tom Osborne, an illiterate rancher who owned that famous outlaw hang-out, the Quien Sabe Ranch, murdered a man named Thorn on the steps of the saloon. Thorn had misrepresented a document and cheated Osborne out of his ranch. When Osborne discovered what had happened he tracked Thorn to the bar, told Thorn he "didn't propose to stand it [and wanted] what's right." Thorn retorted "I'll give you nothing," whereupon Osborne said, "You won't, hey?" pulled out a revolver and shot him. Sheriff Stough had ridden down the street past the saloon just moments before the shooting and reported that: "I rode on about fifty yards when I heard a shot fired. I whirled my horse around, I seen Thorn hump over and run in the saloon door and Osborne after him. As I got off my horse, I heard another shot or two in the saloon. As I jumped inside ... I hollowed to Osborne 'to hold up.' At that time, Osborne was within two or three feet of the back door. I hollowed for him to come to me and he did so, still holding his pistol in his right hand. I grabbed his pistol, took it away from him and started him to jail."

Osborne was sentenced to fifteen years for manslaughter and served his time in the Territorial Penitentiary with Butch Cassidy. Tom Bell, "Charles Hett: Neighbor of Outlaws and Rustlers," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 6 (July - September 1990): 5, 6; Tom Bell, personal communication February 15, 1996.

¹⁰ Ed Farthing, Sr., diary, Fremont County Pioneer Museum.

¹¹ Janet and Maggie Sherlock letters to Peter Sherlock in, Todd R. Guenther, "Dear Peter: The Letters of a Pioneer Mother and Sister," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 7 (April-June 1991): 16. Captain Jack was a Colorado Ute who came to the Wind River Reservation. In 1879, he had been a leader in the violent upheaval on the White River Reservation in which the despised agent Nathan Meeker and others were killed. After killing a Fort Washakie soldier in the spring of 1882, Jack perished when troops fired a cannon into his teepee. Delighted whites concurred with the conclusion in his obituary that cannons as well as schools were educational tools: "On Saturday last he retired to his tepee, little dreaming that he would be carried out of it in a salt bag ... His body will lie in state in a cigar box, until the time set for his burial, when he will be interred with proper ceremonies and a corn planter. We believe that the mountain howitzer is destined ... to become an important factor in the civilization of the Indian and the amelioration of mankind." Bill Nye, quoted in T.A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), 107.

Death was also a frequent visitor within the apparent safety of the home. Typical families of eight to twelve could almost expect that one or two children would die before reaching maturity. In the Cheyenne cemeteries, for example, nearly 40 percent of those people buried between 1875 and 1900 were under the age of ten. In spite of all the physical and emotional difficulties of life on the frontier, many settlers held a belief in progress and the indomitable superiority of American civilization. It was pioneers' firm conviction that, as illustrated by Currier and Ives' contemporary view (*page 4*), wilderness and Native Americans would either have to acquiesce, get out of the way, or be destroyed. As the painting suggests, schools all across the region were at the forefront of this process. Lander celebrated its role in the advancement of western civilization with the end of the successful fund drive and beginning of construction on the stone schoolhouse.¹²

Although advertised bids for school construction projects were not required by Wyoming statute until after 1886, the school house project was put out for bids. Local builders Peter Williamson and William Frederick bid \$3,810 and \$3,757 respectively for stone and brick construction on the 38' x 50' building with thirteen-foot ceilings. The project, however, was awarded to the Rawlins firm of Carson and Bond for a stone building at \$3,557. Bob Bond had a good reputation in Lander, also having built Amoretti's First National Bank and Baldwin's Store, both on Main Street. There is no evidence that an architect drew up plans for the school. Consistent with the time and place, Bond likely designed and engineered the building himself based on the Board's verbal specifications and his experience as a builder.¹³

Construction started at the beginning of October, 1884. On the 7th, Bond began making frequent visits to Ervin F. Cheney's blacksmith shop just east of the river on Main Street (*see photos, page 6*). Almost every other day through November, Bond brought in stone cutting and shaping tools to be sharpened and repaired. In the next few weeks he spent \$52.25 at Cheney's.¹⁴

A number of masons lived in Lander at this time and most probably worked on this project. Among them were the Williamson Brothers who built Ed Tweed's fine stone house on Squaw Creek, Charles Harrison, and widely known Howard Crispin who moved to Lander in 1882. Crispin, who later carved many of Lander's grave stones, is the most likely candidate to have inscribed the datestone which the proud community placed prominently above the school's front door. The stone read, "Lander Public School Erected A.D. 1885."¹⁵

Lander boasted several stone buildings by the mid-1880s. Prominent among them were the Catholic Church, Third and Garfield, built 1882-1883; Baldwin's Store, Third and Main, built 1883-1884; and Amoretti's bank, 258 Main, built 1885-1886. Many quarries on public and private land provided rock for projects small and large. Among the most prominent were Wyopo, about a mile and a half north of Lander, Batrum Gap southeast of town, and Sinks Canyon. The stone had to be hauled in small loads on horse-drawn wagons.

The lion's share of rock work on the school was completed by December 1884. After that, the carpentry work was initiated. The structure now had a recognizable shape and observers thought, albeit incorrectly, that the building was nearly ready for occupancy. The local paper wrote on January 1, 1885:

The New School is approaching its completion thanks to the untiring and most devoted efforts of Mr. P. Kurry [sic, Correy]. The date of its commencement will be published in this paper, also the order of the day. The list of benefactors and subscribers will follow, as soon as possible.¹⁶

In fact, the school still had many months to go before it would be completed, though why it took so long is a mystery. Perhaps the project stalled while additional funds were raised. At any rate, the framing and roofing were not completed until September.

Pat Correy, whose "devoted efforts" were praised by the *Mountaineer* editor, was a well-known local carpenter and family man with a personal interest in Lander's developing school system. Although one of his young children died in the late 1880s, by 1896 he and his wife and five studious children lived at the corner of Sweetwater and Third Streets. A man named Hodder from Salt Lake City helped with the interior

¹² Dennis Frobish, "The Cheyenne Cemetery: Reflections of the Life of a City," *Annals of Wyoming*, 62 (Summer 1990): 90-99; Elliot West, *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 37-41.

¹³ C. G. Coutant, *Lander, Lander Valley, and the Mines Directory*, (Lander: Clipper Book & Job Print, Co., 1896), 23; Edward Farthing, Sr., Diary for 1885, copy on file, Pioneer Museum; "Old School Bell To Pioneer Group," *Wyoming State Journal*, March 16, 1939; *Wind River Mountaineer*, May 28, 1885.

¹⁴ E. F. Cheney Day Ledger, "Blacksmithing Account, Commenced Work Nov. 6, 1883," in Pioneer Museum archive.

¹⁵ *Clipper*, Sept. 24, 1887; "Crispin" folder, vertical files, Pioneer Museum, Lander.

¹⁶ *Wind River Mountaineer*, January 1, 1885.

carpentry and framing. He was best known for his ornate finish work around doors and windows.¹⁷

Ed Farthing, a plasterer, noted in his diary on July 7, 1885, that "Mr. Bond ask me to figer on the plastering of the school house." He began work on August 26, 1885, first helping the carpenters finish up and then devoting several days to shingling the roof. When that was finished, he began the difficult, labor intensive interior lath and plastering. Ed's assistants were Ed Zimmerman and Ed Smith. Presumably, they were addressed by nicknames or surnames to avoid confusion. Farthing's son, Jack, and another man who worked only a half day before quitting rounded out the crew. Farthing paid the latter a total of one dollar.

The lath was in place and the building was finally ready to be plastered at three in the afternoon on September 4. By Monday, September 14, they had "got one Large room finished and nearly the celon of the other when our puttie rund out and Ed Zimmerman got through for he hat to go away." According to Farthing's descendants, lime used in the plaster was procured from a kiln in Sinks Canyon. Other more prominent kilns included Blair and Crispin's kilns north of town near Wyopo.¹⁸ On September 22, 1885, almost a year after the construction project began, Farthing's crew finished plastering the school house and on the 24th, Farthing settled up with Bond. They had plastered 662 square yards at \$1.12 per yard for a total of \$741.44.¹⁹ How much he was paid for his other work is not recorded. Farthing's handiwork received favorable mention in the press:

The walls are very smooth and true, and the finish is firm and beautiful, being as white as Parian marble, and almost as free from cracks on the surface. There is no "chip" cracking discernable in any part of the work.²⁰

The wonderful new school which had taken so long to build was a tremendous improvement on its crude, log walled and dirt-roofed predecessor. A photo shows that a foyer or coat room was located just inside the front door. The building was divided lengthwise into two large, bright and well-ventilated classrooms. The dividing wall, in addition to separating the primary from the upper grades, provided structural support to the building and for the centrally located brick chimney. Each classroom needed a stove to keep students warm.²¹

Capping the new edifice was a lovely-toned bell, cast in 1882 at Vanduzen & Tift's Buckeye Bell Foundry in Cincinnati, Ohio. This beautiful, silvery, 300-400 pound instrument, costing \$75 to \$100, was the source of great community pride, controversy, and excitement.

The strife was related to the roughly simultaneous construction of the Episcopal Church in a story wherein matters of church and state became peculiarly entwined.

Back in December of 1880, prior to the organization of any Lander churches, the Methodists had started a non-denominational Sunday school. Classes were first held in the intermarried white and Shoshone home of old-time frontiersman/trader William Boyd on Washakie Street. The first Sunday school project was a fundraiser for books that evolved into something larger: acquisition of a bell for the Episcopalians and an organ for the Catholics. All agreed that when Lander's first public building was erected, these accouterments would be placed in that structure and the congregations would have to obtain their own equipment.

Nothing worked so simply, however, and from beginning to end, the Sunday school, nascent public school, bell, local saloons, and citizenry were embroiled in comical controversy. First, the Sunday school secretary, who was a government surveyor, worked for months without pay, exhausted his credit and friends' charity, and then gambled away the \$17.50 raised to purchase Sunday school books in a failed attempt to raise money to live on. Three weeks later when the books had not arrived, he confessed when questioned. Frank Ecoffee, Bill Boyd and Billie O'Neal,²² burley

¹⁷ Tom Bell, "Howard Crispin, Master Stonemason: His work still stands in Lander," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 6 (October-December 1990):4,5; "Lander Visit Recalls Building of Our School," *Wyoming State Journal*, August 10, 1939.

¹⁸ Jim Farthing, personal communication, February 20, 1996; Tom Bell, "Howard Crispin, Master Stone Mason," 4, 5.

¹⁹ Edward Farthing, Sr., Diary for 1885, entries for July, August, and September, copy on file, Pioneer Museum.

²⁰ *Wind River Mountaineer*, September 25, 1885; Jim Farthing, personal communication, Feb. 9, 1996, based on a diary kept by his grandfather, Edward Farthing, Sr. The island of Paros was noted for its marble which was used extensively for sculpture in ancient times. More recently, Parian ware was the name of soft cream colored china used unglazed to make statuettes.

²¹ *Wyoming State Journal*, August 26, 1925; Ray Fuller, personal communication, March 1996; Amelia Hall, Mountain View Ranch, May 26, 1930, untitled manuscript in Pioneer Museum collections.

²² Like Bill Boyd, Ecoffee had moved to the Sweetwater gold mines before moving into the Lander valley. Ecoffee had earlier been employed by the renowned frontier trader Bissonette at his trading post on Deer Creek and there become acquainted with Boyd and the large Lajeunesse family. Ecoffee married Bissonette's half-Sioux daughter. Ecoffee bought a ranch where the city of Lander now stands and raised a family there.

William, or Billy O'Neal was another early settler in the Lander valley. He was an organizer and the Captain of the Pushroot Rangers, a local militia formed to fight off attacking Indians and help keep order in the frontier community. Lander's original name was "Pushroot" for all the vegetables grown there to support the nearby gold miners and soldiers at Camps Stambaugh and Brown.

frontiersmen all, dragged the embezzling secretary down the street to Parker's saloon where they learned the soft-hearted bartender had loaned him another \$25 which was also lost.²³

The men told Jack he would have to put up for the kids [so Parker] reached behind the bar and threw out \$50 and told them to buy the song books and have a balance besides.

The balance gave another inspiration to the Sunday school workers and they decided to buy [a] bell and organ and proceeded to raise the money. It came easily for everyone in town chipped in, saloon men, gamblers and all, and the money soon piled up.

The proposition to place the bell on the first public building had its complications and misunderstandings. The Episcopal Church was built [earlier in 1885] and was the community church. There the bell hung. The membership ... stoutly contended that the church was a public building and entitled to [keep] the bell. Others, and among them the ones most active in the Sunday school, believed it should go on the new school house then in process of erection. The [school] building was almost complete and it looked like it would

have no bell in the tower when [several] strongarms, after splicing the main brace, got a wagon, took off the bell and put it where they believed it belonged. Before dawn the clear notes rang out over the city and the whole [panic-stricken] population turned out thinking it was a fire or an Indian uprising. Excitement ran high and when peace was restored, the sun was up in the east and all were apparently pleased except the Episcopalians. It should be added...that when his draft came, young Quinn made good, paid every cent he owed and when he left Lander did so with the high regard of everyone.²⁴

Thus, with the installation of the bell, was completed Lander's stone school house, the first building in town to be erected specifically to serve as a place of learning. Amelia Hall, who had taught in the old log cabin, praised the beautiful new school, "It had two rooms and was such an improvement on the old building. It was that large enough to accommodate all the children in Lander for many years."²⁵

The honor of opening the new school building to students in the autumn of 1885 fell to Mrs. F. E. Caldwell who succeeded Patten as Superintendent for a regular two-year term. Her records of December 7, 1885, show the apportionment of the General County School Fund at that time had increased to \$5000, but it had to be



This c. 1885 photograph shows a forlorn Trinity Episcopal Church with its empty belfry. The church faced east across Third Street toward the slightly older Catholic Church. Pioneer Museum photograph

²³ An Episcopal Church was formed in South Pass City in 1870 by Reverend Fitman. This institution only lasted about one year before the bust in the mining district drove the congregants away. According to "A New Church Bell," *The Clipper*, July 24, 1896, Mrs. J.D. Woodruff initiated another subscription to acquire a bell for Lander's Methodist Episcopal Church. That church bell was double the size of other bells in the city, weighing 700 pounds. It cost \$110. Based on this information, the school bell is believed to have cost somewhat less. "Saloon Men and Gamblers Put Money in Lander Church Fund," *Wyoming State Journal*, April 16, 1932.

William Henry Harrison Boyd was an old-time frontiersman who had been all over the west in the early days. He was associated with trapper-trader Charles Lajeunesse, called Seminoe. The latter had a trading post near Devils Gate on the Sweetwater and was a partner of Bissonette in his post at Deer Creek east of Fort Caspar. About 1865, Seminoe gave his twelve-year-old, half-Shoshone daughter over to Boyd's care during an Indian scare. By the late 1860s the two were living together as man and wife in the South Pass mining district. They afterward took up land along the Popo Agie which quickly became part of the growing town of Lander.

²⁴ "P.S. Quinn, Early Resident, Tells of First Sunday School Organized in Lander Valley," *Wyoming State Journal*, October 28, 1925. In a *Wyoming State Journal* article, October 21, 1937, it is claimed that the bell was removed from the Sunday School building and placed on the schoolhouse by unanimous consent and that subsequent public conscriptions permitted the purchase of another bell for the church.

²⁵ Amelia Hall, Mountain View Ranch, May 26, 1930, untitled manuscript in Pioneer Museum collections.



This photograph of students and faculty at the stone school house was taken on the same day as the photo on page 2. The people are not identified. Fremont County Pioneer Museum photograph

divided among more schools. In the course of the year, the county had expanded to include 260 pupils in eleven school districts.

Incredibly, no records can be found celebrating exactly when the stone school house first opened its doors to students. Only Ed Farthing's diary makes a few oblique references to education during that winter of 1885-1886. On Monday, November 30, 1885, he did some trading with local merchants and bought two school books for his son Harry. Next, on January 21, 1886, he bought Harry a spelling book. On February 11, after mentioning previously that he was ill, he recorded that "Tede y stayd home from School to day he is complaing with lumps in his grind. his Mother rubed him with Rad[illegible] relief."²⁶

The school's better documented third year opened on Monday, October 3, 1887, with forty pupils: sixteen in the principal department and twenty-four in primary. J. B. Long was master of the principal grades while Mrs. T. R. Beason taught primary classes. Our modern popular belief that married women were not considered suitable teachers during the nineteenth century clearly did not hold true in Lander. The Beasons ranched about twelve miles from town so she boarded while school was in session. When Long left shortly

after the beginning of the year Beason was promoted to replace him.

The Clipper of Sept. 17, 1887, congratulated the Board for securing the services of such accomplished and efficient teachers and noted a few weeks later that the public school was progressing nicely and that attendance was increasing. To further provide for the many students' needs, J. K. Moore's big Lander store advertised a "Large lot of School Books, just received." The growth was largely a seasonal occurrence as rural kids' ranch and farm responsibilities decreased in autumn and they were enabled to attend classes. Newly arrived families contributed to the student body. Also in November, the voters of School District One were called by Board Secretary, renowned Indian fighter, reservation farming instructor and local jeweler, Finn

²⁶ Farthing diary, page 79, Nov. 30, 1885; page 92, Jan. 21, 1886; page 94, Jan. 31, 1886; page 98, Feb. 11, 1886; in Pioneer Museum collections. At this time, Farthing contributed a dollar to the most recent fund drive, this time "to help pay the pasiage of three man to Chiane to spout about the new cort house."

Burnett, to a special meeting in the school house to fill a vacancy on the board.²⁷

Even while it appeared that life and learning would proceed smoothly beneath the stone schoolhouse's pretty bell, dissension again reared its head and Lander was in an uproar during the 1887 holiday season. It became clear that the difficulties of erecting the building were simple matters compared with actually operating the school. The faculty was in flux. Throughout the winter positions were vacated, charges of corruption were leveled, and a competing school was started. The public school faced stiff, if short-lived, private competition and then, upon coming up victorious, increased its enrollment by half. The problem developed when some of Lander's prominent families preferred to send twenty-four of their children to a newly organized private, or "select," school, which also opened in October of 1887, and was apparently affiliated with Reverend Roberts and the Episcopal Church.

The select school teacher was a Mrs. M. C. Vineyard, who was evaluated after a few weeks as being "generally satisfactory" but some parents and board members openly hoped that "there should be a little more life infused" into her overly conservative and stern methods and curriculum. In a tumultuous pre-Christmas meeting of the select school trustees and patrons, the infuriated Mrs. Vineyard resigned in an irreversible manner. J. I. Patten was given the responsibility of finding a replacement. Preferred candidates would be local but were to be "of high order."²⁸

At the same meeting select school board members J. Russell and M.W. Shidy resigned. They also served on the board of the public school, a conflict of interest which was deemed "impolitic." Businessmen J. B. Houghton, E. T. St. John, E. F. Cheney, and Mr. Billings were elected to fill the many vacancies on the select school board. Rev. Roberts promised to help. The *Clipper's* editor was glad to see the determination of local citizens to build up Lander's educational system.

Mrs. Vineyard determined to plow ahead on her own. She promptly advertised that she would open her own private school on January 2, next door to the Amoretti residence. Tuition would be \$5 per month plus \$1 for incidentals. Her effort and that of the select school were short-lived and soon all of Lander's kids were enrolled in the public school.²⁹

That same contentious Christmas season, the editor of the *Wind River Mountaineer* charged F. E. Caldwell and the revered Capt. H. G. Nickerson with misuse of public school funds during the building of the stone schoolhouse. But, the *Clipper* editor would hear none of it, nor did the public put stock in the innuendoes

which quickly blew away in the winter zephyrs.³⁰

In January, the *Clipper* editor wrote, referring to the enlarged student body, that, "our public schools were never in a more flourishing condition." He praised the addition of steps at the school's front door, but complained about water running around the bridge and flooding west Main Street which made "travel ugly for pedestrians especially school children." For weeks the children were compelled to wade through 1" to 3" of water flowing over deep mud in order to reach the schoolhouse. Residents near the bridge were even forced from their homes by the flood.³¹

At mid-month, Mrs. Beason resigned when her husband accepted a ranch manager position on a large operation far away in the northeast part of the county. She was replaced by Miss Agnes Russell who had taken over the primary grades when Beason became principal. The *Mountaineer* attacked Miss Russell who was defended by the *Clipper* as having been "competent and satisfactory especially in light of the disadvantages under which she labored," though the problems she encountered were not identified. The *Clipper* added that the school under her management was an improvement over the previous winter under Caldwell.³²

One of the territorial teachers institutes was held in Lander in 1888. These annual, state-sponsored events were held at locations all around the territory for "the instruction and advancement of teachers." The program began in 1877; after the University of Wyoming was founded in 1886, it became an active participant. At least some of the lecturers in Lander were local instructors. Programs included, "How to interest pupils in reading," by Miss Mattie Standish; "Why should Physiology be taught in our schools," by Miss Lizzie Carr of Lander (this subject, with an emphasis on the evils of alcohol, became mandatory in the *Revised Statutes of Wyoming (1887)*; "A teacher's duty outside the school-room," by Miss Agnes Russell of Lander; "Should teachers expect or require of pupils a high moral standard?" by Miss Fannie Alden; and "An ideal teacher," by Miss Mamie L. Hayes.³³

²⁷ *Clipper*, Sept. 17, Oct. 1, Oct. 8, Nov. 19, 1887. Burnett was former Senator Al Simpson's great-grandfather.

²⁸ *Clipper*, Sept. 24, Nov. 5, December 24, 1887.

²⁹ *Clipper*, Dec. 31, 1887.

³⁰ *Clipper*, Jan. 7, 1888.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Clipper*, Jan. 21, 1888.

³³ "Program for Teacher's [sic] Association, Nov. 24th, 1888," *Clipper*, Nov. 21, 1888; Robert Rosenberg, "Historic Overview of Education in Sublette County, Wyoming," contract report for the Sublette County Certified Local Government Commission, on file, Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, 1988.

In spite of the obstacles, Lander's educational system was progressing. With the addition of the school house, Lander was able to boast in a "Boom" edition of the *Clipper*, intended to attract settlers by providing,

a pleasant place in which to make a home ... we present... a city delightfully situated, with good society, schools and churches, an atmosphere of moral refinement in which to rear and educate their children, and all the elevating influence of an eastern city ... The settler coming to Fremont County can ... be in an old, settled community. They would have the advantages of Church and School. Possibly the churches and schools might be a little more distant than in the east, but the miles are not as long in Wyoming [as in other places] ...³⁴

In part because the town now had a fine school to help attract families, the population began to grow almost exponentially. Their numbers and the institutions they helped develop began to smooth Lander's rough frontier edges. Homesteaders were moving into the valleys of the Popo Agie River, whose branches flow through and around Lander, and the nearby Wind River, in such numbers that Territorial Governor Moonlight in 1887 asked the Department of Interior to promptly locate a Land Office in Lander.

With the influx of people the county now contained fifteen school districts. Lander, the first formed and numbered "1," was still the largest and received the greatest appropriation: \$784.67 out of \$4059.86. Yet, this amount was less than in years past. *Clipper* editor Wynn wrote that the beautiful and still new public school house would have to close about April 1, 1888, due to the severe shortage of funds. This situation resulted from the increased competition for a limited county school budget which was based on an inadequately small tax levy. People who had been happy to make generous contributions to build the school were not eager to pay taxes sufficient to fund operations. Wynn hoped the problem would be resolved and school would be able to resume in September.³⁵

Sometimes, attempts were made to procure additional school funds from diverse or unorthodox sources. On November 5, 1887, the *Clipper* reported that "a scraping affair occurred at one of our saloons, in consequence of which one Charley Rogers, failing to contribute to the school fund the modest sum of thirty dollars, was sent to jail."

Among those flocking to the Lander area were many midwesterners. Not all of them came as families or were even adults. The school faculty and student body

were mixtures of people from all over the globe and with strikingly different backgrounds. A young bachelor named Lou Blakesley emigrated to Lander and became one of the last people to teach in the intact stone schoolhouse. He was born in Illinois in 1868 and moved to Kansas with his parents while still a youth. He and several friends trailed a herd of horses to Lander to sell in 1890. He stayed and soon married local girl Louella Knott. Blakesley took charge of the school and taught there until 1893 when he moved to Greybull.³⁶

Another Kansan who came alone joined the student body. After reaching maturity he helped the community chart its course into the twentieth century. Lloyd Iiams' mother died when he was born in 1871. His Civil War veteran father and oldest brother placed the baby in care of an aunt and made their way west to pioneer near Lander. During his childhood, Lloyd was fascinated by letters from the wild west and at age of 14, determined to strike out on his own. Reaching Cheyenne, he hired on as a cowboy with a westbound trail crew to help drive cattle farther west. He left them in the vicinity of South Pass and turned north. "Upon reaching Lander, he received a warm welcome from the united family, entered the stone building ... and went to school."

Iiams accumulated valuable knowledge within the stone walls that contributed to his future success. He worked as a ranch foreman in Montana, then returned to Lander and "acquired the C. G. Coutant homestead at the foot of Table Mountain." He enlarged the orchard, developed the ranch, attracted national seed companies to use Lander area agricultural products, and started a creamery and cheese factory. Altogether, he played a significant role in the development of commercial agriculture around Lander.³⁷

During the 1890s Lander's stone schoolhouse became seriously overcrowded. When it was erected the student body consisted of fewer than 40 students, but this figure doubled every few years. It is a wonder that teach-

³⁴ *Clipper*, October 29, 1887.

³⁵ *Clipper*, Jan. 7, 1888.

³⁶ Tom Bell, "Overland to Wyoming in 1890," *Wind River Mountaineer* 8 (January - March 1992): 11.

³⁷ The Coutant family came to Lander in the 1890s after a stint in the South Pass gold fields. Charles, the patriarch, published the *Lander Clipper* during the booming mid-1890s, was active in the educational community, and became Wyoming's first historian of note when he published his massive *History of Wyoming* in 1899. The ranch, consisting of claims made by several family members, is now owned by the author of this article who lives in Lloyd Iiams' 1890s ranch house next to the Coutants' collapsed creekbank dugout. *Wyoming State Journal*, "Death of Lloyd Iiams Closes a Useful Life," April 15, 1937.

ers were able to keep up from week to week. Enrollment figures for primary, intermediate, and grammar school classes document the village's rapidly swelling population:

| <i>Academic Year Beginning</i> | <i>No. Students</i> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1892 | 55 |
| 1893 | 86 |
| beginning 1894 | 137 |
| final 1894 | 209 |

While much of the nation languished during the economic hard times of the 1890s, Lander boomed. (Compare the view of Main Street, *below*, to those on page 6). There was very little cash throughout the 1880s and 1890s, but ambitious locals found ways to start new businesses, erect large buildings and accumulate real estate, live stock, and other types of property so that the bustling community began to assume a prosperous air. Already, by 1893, the eight-year-old stone schoolhouse, which even the town's most aspiring boosters had thought would serve for many years, was far too small. If Lander was to continue to prosper, the need for a new school had to be addressed.

The annual school meeting for this district was held Monday evening ... There was some talk indulged in with reference to bonding the district for the purpose

of erecting a school building, which shall be sufficiently large to properly accommodate the school population which has so increased that the old building is inadequate.³⁸

The school board saw no reason to abandon the stone school in response to the overflowing classrooms. Instead, in 1895, a huge, brick addition was planned that would dwarf the stone school which would become the rear wing of the large structure (*right*). During construction, about half of the front wall of the stone school was removed and the proud, frontier era datestone which had graced the front entry was broken, discarded, and buried beneath the new building. The belfry was removed from the stone school when the front wall was torn down. The old Sunday school bell was moved to a new housing above the new front door where "the old timers can [still] hear in its clear tones the spirit and integrity of the old pioneer."³⁹

High winds slowed the brick-layers and the magnificent \$10,000 building was not ready until late in the

³⁸ *Fremont Clipper*, December 17, 1887; "School Meeting," *Clipper*, May 5, 1893; "Our Schools," *Clipper*, September 14, 1895.

³⁹ "It Was Dedicated Monday," *Fremont Clipper*, November 15, 1895; "The New School Building," *Clipper* [?], October 11, 1895; "P. S. Quinn, Early Resident, Tells of First Sunday School Organized in Lander Valley," *Wyoming State Journal*, October 28, 1925.



Fremont County Pioneer Museum

The view eastward up Main Street in 1907. Results of extensive development during the 1890s and early 1900s are plainly visible. The four-story Fremont Hotel (right), built in 1891, was the largest building in the county.

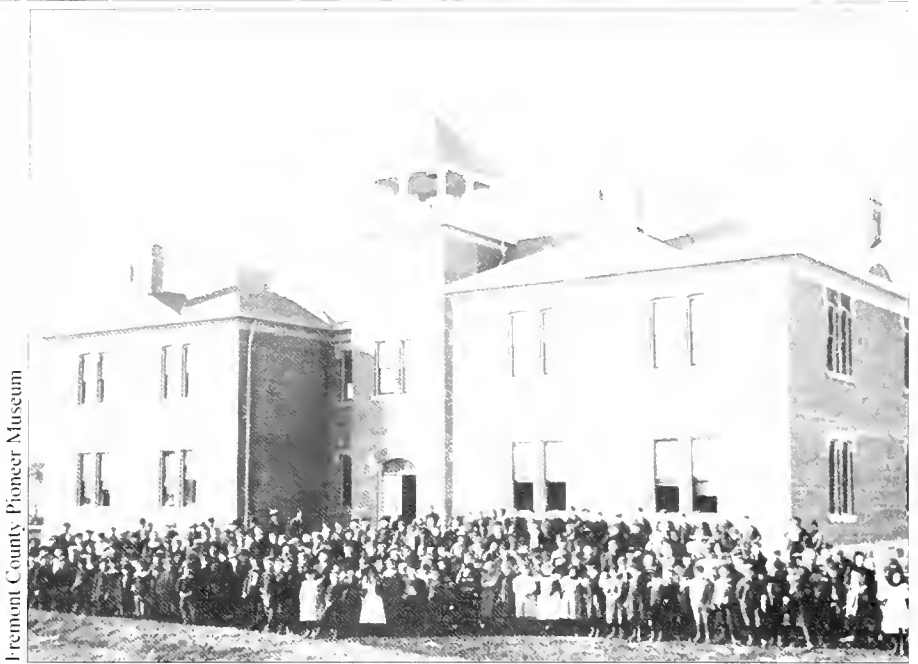
fall. It was finally dedicated on November 11, 1895. The new complex provided space for all grades through twelve. This was the first time complete high school coursework was offered in Lander. That significant accomplishment was still a rarity in rural parts of Wyoming. The 1896 *Lander Directory* proudly boasted:

The pride of the City of Lander is largely centered in its public schools. No expense has been spared to make the schools all that they should be to insure [sic] the complete education of our youth, and, to this end, the great effort of the school board has been tending. Competent teachers, a comfortable and even elegant school building, and all the necessary appliances have been provided, and the consequences are that we have a public school system equal to the best in the country.

Lander [now has] the distinction of being an educational center. The Lander High School is recognized as being one of the best in the State. It is one of the "Accredited High Schools," and our graduates may enter the State University on the presentation of their diplomas. Our courses are thorough and practical. Our magnificent High School building would be an honor to a city many times the size of our own. Our Public School Library consists of over 500 volumes...Our chemical laboratory is a well equipped department of chemical science, where individual class work is performed. In this department, set apart expressly for chemical operations, may be found apparatus and chemicals necessary to perform all important experiments in connection with the subject.

The citizens of Lander refer with pride to her public schools, and in doing so they do not forget ...the wonderful progress made in the past three years...⁴⁰

The school board had possessed the wisdom to plan ahead for future growth and the building was so spacious that it even contained extra classrooms in anticipation of continued growth. The second floor of the new addition was, at first, empty in anticipation of a continually expanding student body. In the first year of use, classes occupied only the four downstairs rooms in the new building and the two rooms in the stone school. One of these latter was used by the primary



Front view of the 1895 brick addition to the stone school. The older structure is hidden from view behind the center of this comparatively massive edifice.

department and the other for laboratory purposes, probably the chemistry lab described in the *Lander Directory*.

It is interesting to note that some of Lander's most influential families, who played instrumental roles in the creation of the school district and construction of the school, did not send their children to attend. At different times during the 1880s through early 1900s, the Amoretis, Baldwins, Crowleys, Parks, and others sent their children away to boarding schools in Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, and elsewhere. This included the extended Sherlock-Smith family which, even after Maggie's terrible death, sent four of her siblings away for educations. Perhaps, in spite of local boosters' cheer-leading, the Lander school was not as good as advertised. Parents may have desired to obtain a more well-rounded and diverse education in an institution with a larger faculty, and greater emphasis on religious instruction as most of these schools were associated with churches. An additional intent may have been to expose these small-town frontier children to a more cosmopolitan life-style similar to what their parents had known before settling on the western frontier. Or, in some cases, the decision may have represented an effort to elevate a family's social status in the community.⁴¹

⁴⁰ C. G. Coutant, *Lander, Lander Valley and the Mines Directory* (Lander: Clipper Book and Job Print, 1896), ii, 3.

Professor Little, in charge of the Lander Public School, anticipated that enrollment would explode to 240 or 250 during the 1895-1896 year. The larger student body resulted, in part, from the fact that high school courses would now be offered so older students would attend. Previously, only grammar students were provided for. The Class of 1901, consisting of ten boys and one girl, was the first to graduate after taking all twelve grades in Lander. Their education began in the old stone school in 1889, the last year Wyoming was just a frontier territory. Their commencement marked another milestone in the development of Lander's educational system.

After spending a huge sum on construction, the school board overlooked important finishing details. Worse, subsequent administrations neglected their responsibility to maintain the fine building. Within a few years both old and new sections were embarrassingly shabby. Finally, in 1904, the trustees made considerable progress. Outhouses were erected, with separate facilities for the boys and girls. A six-foot board fence segregated the playground and "the boys are shut out entirely of the girls department and what has heretofore been a social disgrace to the Lander Public Schools has been entirely remedied."

Work on the dilapidated main building was also accomplished.

The repairs and painting on the high school building improved the appearance of that institution of learning about 100 per cent. No repairs having been put on the building since its erection in 1895. It began to look like a place only inhabitable for "Georgia corn crackers" or "South Carolina clay eaters." It required 97 new panes of glass to replace those broken out of the windows during the past ten years. Seventeen door knobs in the building are either entirely lost or broken. The interior and exterior of the school building now look neat as paint and calcimining can make it. Messrs. Sypes, Shedd and Coon are royal gems when it comes to school matters, and the CLIPPER would recommend that the tax-payers, who are in most cases the parents of the pupils who attend the schools, go and look over the school buildings and premises themselves. The improvements not only add to the good looks of the building and premises but serve to preserve the building as well.⁴²

Some of the damage and wear to the building resulted from activities unfamiliar to modern scholars. For example, one Halloween, a group of students, including both boys and girls, broke into the building and took a calf upstairs. The calf was tied to the bell rope and rang the bell all night long as it wandered

back and forth. In such settled times, no local men ran into the streets in their nightclothes clutching a rifle and fearing an Indian attack like earlier residents had during the nocturnal celebration of the bell's placement on the stone school house.⁴³

Among the boys who were separated from the "girls department" were several who loved to play baseball. The ball-field at the school was merely an open area in the adjoining cow-pasture with a hump in the middle for a pitcher's mound. One of the boys, Jim Scott, born in 1888 in Deadwood, South Dakota, started school in the old stone schoolhouse about 1893. On the sandlot he usually played third base and planned to be doctor when he grew up. That was before he was spotted by professional scouts. Scott went on to national prominence as a pitcher with "the Chicago White Sox for whom he twirled the pill for many years." Nicknamed "Death Valley Jim" in the pros, he averaged forty games per season and stopped both the mighty Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth. Scott left baseball in 1917 and served as a captain in the United States Army during World War I. He was not part of the infamous "Black Sox" team that threw the 1919 World Series. George Farthing, son of the man who plastered the walls of the stone school in 1885, also went on to play pro ball. Though the Lander Public School had no physical education program, at least two local sons made good in the world of sport.⁴⁴

Highly respected Lander physician Arthur H. Cooper, as a member of the school board, had long promoted student health and physical education. When he finally succeeded in having them added to the curriculum in 1925, the *Wyoming State Journal* acknowledged the benefits of "the change in policy to modern methods of handling the training of the physical life of the entire student body." The paper went on to point out that what was still needed to fully implement the pro-

⁴¹ Many documents in the Pioneer Museum, and the Tibbals Collection and Smith and Sherlock files, as well as other documents and artifacts at South Pass City State Historic Site, contain information on this subject which begs further research. See, for example, Janet Sherlock Smith letter, March 4, 1883, and Sister Mary Charles letter, February 8, 1883, both quoted in Todd Guenther, ed., "Dear Peter, The Letters of a Pioneer Mother and Sister," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 7 (April - June, 1991): 24, 25.

⁴² *Clipper*, September 2, 1904.

⁴³ Tim Buck Two, "In Lander," *Wyoming State Journal*, December 30, 1937.

⁴⁴ "Ball Playing Hero Returns to Boyland," *Wyoming State Journal*, September 26, 1940; "Jimmy Scott Tells About His Career on the Diamond," *Wyoming State Journal*, October 21, 1910; "Scott, James," folder, vertical files, Pioneer Museum; Greg Harris, National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Cooperstown, New York, telephone interview, March 29, 1996.

gram were adequate facilities adjacent to the school, especially a "modern athletic field for out-of-doors activities."⁴⁵

Cooper also fought to get the schools to hire a nurse to look after the welfare of the students. He did not succeed in this effort until tragedy struck during the winter of 1924. On October 9, nine-year-old Roy Ogden had been playing on the swings and eating an apple at recess. When recess ended and

the bell rang he started to run in the back door [into the old stone schoolhouse]. Very near the door he fell, jumped up and ran a few steps more and fell again. No sign of injury was to be noticed except a tiny red mark on the forehead. While running with his mouth full of apple he had inhaled some...two doctors and three nurses worked over the lifeless body for two hours but he never drew breath from the time he fell the second time.

Roy was in the third grade, a bright, active child, and the empty seat and silence in place of his usual ready response caused a hush and atmosphere of sadness to fall over the room and the children of the school who sense the untimely loss of their playmate, a life just begun.⁴⁶

It was quickly recognized that the boy might have survived had adequate medical care been immediately available and the school board soon hired a nurse. A few months later, in February 1925, Dr. Cooper himself died prematurely. The community grieved with his widow, who was hired as a second school nurse.⁴⁷

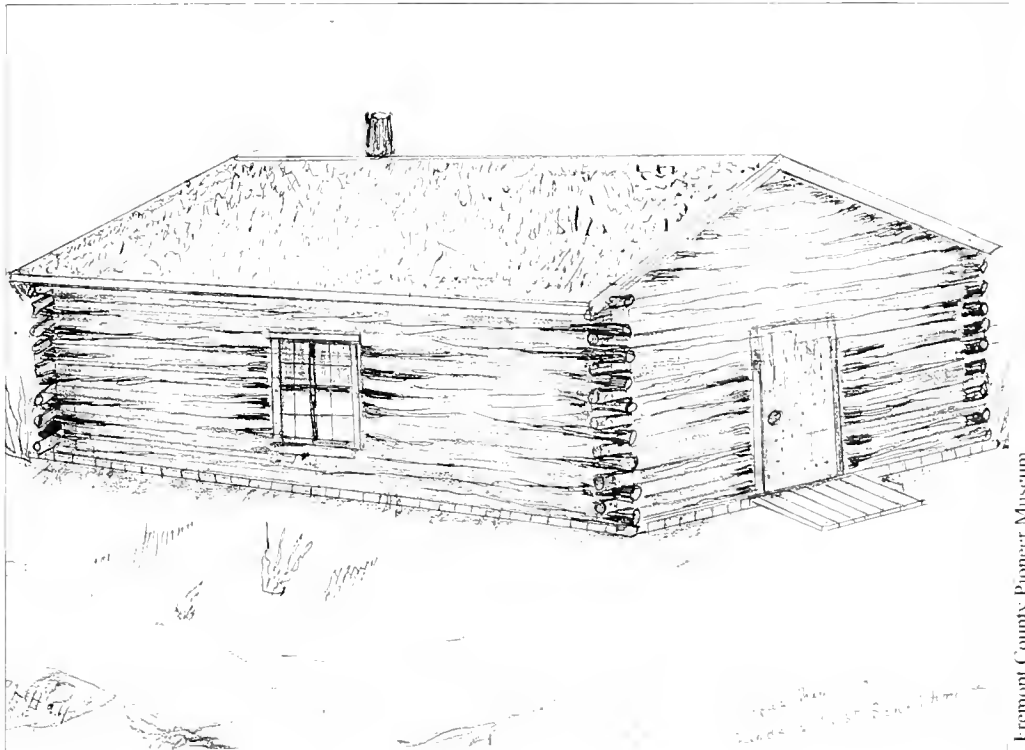
Throughout the first decades of the twentieth century the student body continued to grow and within just a few years still more classroom space was needed. Across sixth street from the stone and brick building another school was constructed in 1912. This ornate yellow brick structure served as Lander's high school until 1919. In that year, the brand new Fremont County Vocational High School opened at the west end of town and the 1912 high school was converted to a grade school. The old stone and brick school building continued in its role as a grade school until 1937 when the present South Elementary was constructed just a block and a half away.

The dedication ceremony for South Elementary became something of a memorial for the pioneer era and the old stone school. That aging building was still a focal point of the community and the things it stood for were much in peoples' minds. Though elderly pioneers attending the function cheered the wonderful, modern, new facility, they wistfully recalled the old days on the frontier. Robert Hall, husband of frontier teacher Amelia Hall who had passed away just the year before, provided a nostalgic look at early educational

⁴⁵ Tom Bell, "Pioneer Profiles: Dr. Arthur H. Cooper," *Wind River Mountaineer*, 11 (July - September 1995): 2, 29, 30; Tom Bell, personal communication, March 29, 1996.

⁴⁶ "Chokes On Apple Results in Death," *Wyoming State Journal*, October 10, 1924; Ruth Trbovich interview, March 29, 1996, Lander; Tom Bell, personal communication, March 29, 1996.

⁴⁷ Tom Bell, personal communication, March 29, 1996.



Aged pioneer Robert Hall's 1937 sketch of Lander's first school, a crude, log structure built in the middle of Main Street.

efforts. He also presented the principal with a large, framed drawing he made of Lander's first school. He stated that it was to be placed in the new facility to remind students of the progress that had been made since Lander was founded. Though pleased and awed by the community's progress, he rued the forthcoming abandonment of the stone building they had worked so hard to build and whose useful life they had intended, like the stone buildings of Europe, to last for so much longer.⁴⁸

The stone schoolhouse, with the huge brick addition, was apparently used for storage for the next two years. In 1939 the forlorn structure was leased from the county by Charles Hayes who headquartered a trucking business there. The stone schoolhouse was converted into a machine shop. Structural modifications were necessary to accommodate this new function, including removal of interior walls and knocking out portions of two of the school's exterior stone walls to create large bay doors. Bays were also built into the north and south walls of the brick addition and it was used as a drive-through warehouse (*see photograph, below*).

During Hayes' construction work, a chance visit to the school by the elderly son of one of the carpenters who erected the building in 1885 was described in the local paper:

Fred C. Hodder of Glendale, Calif., is here looking over Lander where his father was an early day carpenter and worked on the school house in [1885]. From the old building now being remodeled by Charles Hayes, Mr. Hodder rescued a wood carved spiral ornament which adorned the two upper corners of a door casing as the last word in builder's art. This was his father's particular line and the souvenir looks the part with the old wrought iron nails still sticking through ... Mr. Hayes further dug up a stone upon which was carved "1885", this being presumably the corner stone of the rock building first built to house the halls of learning in Lander. It is suggested that this rock suitably tableted follow the bell which Mr. Hayes generously donated to the Lander Pioneers association and be a part of the museum at the pioneer cabin.⁴⁹

Hayes had removed the belfry above the brick addition and donated the bell. Stub Farlow, whose image, many believe, appears on the Wyoming license plate, hauled the bell to the cabin. Mart Hornecker sug-

gested that it be mounted on the Pioneer Cabin Museum to call old-timers to meetings. A few years later, the bell was thus installed and rung for the first time from its new perch at midday on a Wednesday in September of 1941. The stone was not added to Museum collections until 1996.⁵⁰

During the early 1950s, part of the second floor of the brick addition was used as a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) training room. The CAP was a federally sponsored program intended to create and maintain a nationwide pool of trained flight personnel, thereby avoiding a repetition of pre World War II deficiencies during an era of heightening Cold War tensions. It trained young people

⁴⁸ *Wyoming State Journal*, July 1, 1981; *Journal*, March 15, 1918; *Journal*, March 27, 1941; Ray Fuller, Jim Farthing, and Tom Bell interviews, Lander, February 17, 1996; "First School House," *Wyoming State Journal*, May 26, 1938.

⁴⁹ "Lander Visit Recalls Building of Our School," *Wyoming State Journal*, August 10, 1939; "Death of Builder Recalls First School," *Wyoming State Journal*, December 19, 1940. The *Wyoming State Journal*, February 24, 1938, said Hayes was purchasing the building but evidently the deal fell through and he only leased it according to later articles. The dated "corner stone" described in the quoted passage was actually the datestone located high in the wall above the front door of the school. For some reason, Hayes did not donate it to the Pioneer Museum. Instead, the stone fragment remained in the school building until the mid-1980s when the Road Department vacated the school and was in the process of throwing the oil spattered stone away. County Clerk Jim Farthing's step son, Galen Richards, rescued the stone and gave it to his father for safe-keeping. It was stored for a decade in a shed behind Farthing's house and donated to the Pioneer Museum on February 12, 1996, for eventual inclusion in the restored school.

⁵⁰ "Old School Bell To Pioneer Group," *Wyoming State Journal*, March 16, 1939; "First School Bell Rings for Pioneers," *Wyoming State Journal*, September 11, 1941.



The rear and north side of the two schools, shown in this 1985 photograph. Bay doors were added in the late 1930s.

in airplane identification, meteorology, navigation and basic flying skills, helped locate missing aircraft, etc. The local chapter was outfitted with a Link Trainer which was housed in the old school building. This covered cockpit device was used to teach instrument flying. Access to the CAP facilities was via an outside fire-escape staircase on the south side of the brick building.⁵¹

By 1964 both the stone and brick sections of the dilapidated school had reverted to county use. The stone portion became the County Road Department maintenance shop. The first floor of the brick addition was used as a warehouse and the second story was converted into a firearms training range for the police and sheriff's departments. Instructional shooting and firearms safety classes for local youth were also held there.⁵²

At first glance, some of the post-1939 adaptations of the old school seem dismal. However, because the building continued to be immediately useful it was preserved. And, in reality, the building's new roles were part of significant trends. The dawning era of automobile transportation was a key part of Lander's continued development in the larger context of twentieth century evolution of the West. During the period when motor vehicles became the primary mode of transportation, many of the trucks that kept Lander's stores and homes supplied with necessities were maintained in the building and much of the freight was handled there. Later, during the 1960s and '70s, Wyoming roadways were upgraded to accommodate dramatically increasing numbers of vehicles traveling at ever higher speeds. During this period, the school continued to play a major transportation related role. The heavy equipment which built and kept the roads passable was maintained within the old stone walls. Meanwhile, the building continued to play an educational and training role. Area law enforcement agencies, youth education activities, and even in national defense programs all utilized the space provided by Lander's pioneer settlers so many years before.

When the County Road Department obtained new garages northwest of town, the stone school house entered a truly bleak stage and was very nearly destroyed. In 1985, the 100th anniversary of the opening of the stone school, the county let a bid to demolish the entire stone and brick complex. The brick addition was razed that autumn. Almost literally stepping in front of the wrecking-ball, County Clerk Jim Farthing (grandson of builder Ed Farthing) and Tom Bell, staff historian at the Pioneer Museum and descendant of an even earlier

pioneer family, conferred to try to save the historically significant stone school before it was too late. With the support of other concerned citizens, they managed to persuade the Fremont County Commissioners to halt the destruction of the stone building. After the brick addition was removed, the desolate stone building was left standing with the front wall gaping open.⁵³

Demolition contractor Bill Gay "presented a figure for leaving the old school building [intact] at an estimated extra cost of \$6000" to the Commissioners. According to the terms of an agreement established between the County Commissioners, the County Clerk, and the Pioneer Museum, the Museum budget had to underwrite full-payment of this remarkable demand. This was a staggering amount of money for the Museum and terminated most other projects.

The original preservation plan called for a committee separate from both the Museum and Pioneer Association to manage funds contributed to the Save Old School (SOS) project. In subsequent years the fund has come under the jurisdiction of the Pioneer Association and is augmented by additional funds in the Pioneer Museum budget which, together, total several thousand dollars.

County Clerk Farthing and the Commissioners in 1985 discussed using the old building to store voting machines, which would save the County about \$500 per month. Weatherizing the structure would involve extending the roof, boarding up the front wall, insulating the ceiling, and having the utilities turned back on. In exchange for use of the building for an unspecified number of years, the clerk's office agreed to repair and maintain the building. This effectively, if temporarily, preserved the structure. Thus, the old stone school house which was once the figurehead of culture and education in Lander and the Wind River valley narrowly escaped from the brink of destruction.⁵⁴

Two years later, on May 12, 1987, Tom Bell and Museum Director Henry Hudson again met with the

⁵¹ Eva (Freese) Peden, personal communication, February 23, 1996. Peden was a member of CAP.

⁵² Bill Marion, "90 Year-Old Landmark, Once a School, Leaves Main Street," *Wyoming State Journal*, 1964.

⁵³ People who spoke in defense of the school included Walt Ellis, Kathy Daniels, Rosalyn Hedges, Ada McDonnell, Colleen Coleman, and Dave Raynolds who all spoke at Commission meetings. Personal communication, Jim Farthing and Tom Bell, February, 1996; Fremont County Commissioners Proceedings, April 23, May 14, and May 21, 1985.

⁵⁴ County Commissioner's Proceedings, August 27, 1985; Tom Bell, "Old Stone Schoolhouse Project," manuscript, Pioneer Museum, n.d.

Commissioners. They requested that the County deed the stone school house property—three lots and two buildings—at Sixth and Garfield Streets to the Museum Board. The two men described plans to restore and use the old building for children's exhibits. Already the Lander Garden Club and the Pioneer Association were removing extensive rubble deposits and landscaping the lots. This included obtaining topsoil, planting trees, bushes, flowers, and grass and installing an underground sprinkler system. Clark's Landscaping and City Plumbing contributed to the watering system.

The Commissioners noted that voting machines were still being stored in the two buildings on the property and stated that until new facilities could be constructed for that purpose, the voting machines would have to remain. There were no plans to build new storage facilities and it was evident that this would be a long term arrangement. With that understanding, Commissioner Tom Satterfield of Riverton moved that Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 28 of the Original Townsite of Lander be deeded to the Fremont County Pioneer Museum. The deed was recorded on May 20.

The Pioneer Museum became responsible for utilities and other expenses even though the Museum did not get possession of the building.⁵⁵ After repeated requests by the Pioneer Museum, the huge, archaic mechanical voting machines finally were removed from the building during 1996 when the county began using smaller Optech machines that were stored elsewhere.

Due to lack of extensive maintenance the building is now at a crossroads. It will not survive much longer without comprehensive repairs. If it is to be restored, a new use must be identified which is both appropriate and capable of generating sufficient public excitement to spur a successful, large-scale fund-raising effort. A complicating factor is that the Pioneer Museum itself, which traces its roots to 1886 and was housed in the oldest museum building in Wyoming, was declared unsafe and closed permanently in September 1998. This more pressing problem of finding new quarters for the Pioneer Museum has taken precedence over concerns for the old stone schoolhouse and the ultimate fate of the building is unknown.

Lander's stone school house served as a place of learning from 1885 to 1937. It later played less significant

roles in maintaining the Wind River Valley's transportation connections with the outside world. During that period it still played a limited educational role as part of a complex that provided various types of training space for children, law enforcement officials, and defense programs. From 1985 to 1997 the old building housed Fremont County's voting machines and in that way continued to contribute to the county's progress even though its maintenance has been largely ignored. After many decades of physical neglect, a group of seriously interested citizens hopes to restore the once beautiful building to a position of prominence. The current preservation effort, like the original construction drive, is dependent on public generosity. It is also an extension of the work of those early pioneers who shaped the community and state. They built the school of stone to prepare their children for life in the mysteries of the coming century, and to last indefinitely into the future, for us. They graced the building with a bell which will be returned to the building to summon succeeding generations. The early pioneers expected us to show the same foresight they demonstrated by taking care of our own descendants and assuming responsibility for the well-being of the community. This is accomplished in part by preserving this edifice as we prepare to enter not only a new century, but a new millennium.

⁵⁵ Tom Bell, personal communication, February 12, 1996; Fremont County Commissioners minutes, May 12, 1987; County Commissioners Deed, May 12, 1987; Tom Bell, photo caption, *Wind River Mountaineer*, 1 (October - December 1985): 21.

Todd Guenther received a BA/Honors in Anthropology/Archaeology and MA in American Studies, both from the University of Wyoming. He has been a field crew supervisor for the Office of the Wyoming State Archaeologist, Curator/Assistant Superintendent at South Pass City State Historic Site, and is now the director of the Pioneer Museum in Lander.

Homesteading the Thunder Basin: Teckla, Wyoming, 1917-1938

By William D. Fischer

It was [a hard life] at the time, [but] that's the way it was. People now can't imagine what it was like, but them times it was there and nobody knew any different.¹

Although the history of homesteading in the Teckla area of the Thunder Basin in northeast Wyoming provides valuable insight on numerous issues, it is the experiences and responses of common homesteaders to their situation that define this article.² Nevertheless, the national context in which the experience took place remains essential to the story. The Teckla story supports and defies classical and contemporary historical interpretations of homesteading in the Thunder Basin, and the American West in general.

The story is primarily narrated in historical accounts as a futile and ignorant attempt at farming luckily rescued by government intervention. Despite traditional historical accounts of the period, Teckla homesteaders displayed a considerable amount of personal initiative and community cooperation which allowed them to experience a degree of success and personal joy despite economic fluctuations and climactic vicissitudes. The popular historical interpretation minimizes the validity of the experience, and distorts the outcome of it as well. In fact, many Teckla homesteaders did succeed during the 1920s and occasionally prospered during their experience, while government intervention during the 1930s often failed to benefit substantially many of the homesteaders. Many Teckla homestead-

ers demonstrated personal initiative, fought the odds, and believed in what they were doing; however, they also relied on collective strength and accepted government assistance. Homesteaders in the Thunder Basin undoubtedly settled the area with numerous intentions, and a permanent home ranked high among them. As a group they were neither completely naive victims in a widespread land fraud when they arrived, nor were they rescued by the government from all despair when they left. Their story presents a much more dynamic account.³

¹ Robert R. Mackey, interview by author, tape recording, Teckla, Wyoming, 14 October 1997; Mr. Mackey was born in 1924.

² This article is an historical analysis of the Teckla homesteading community with a particular emphasis on the William and Rhoda Mackey homestead. Those interested in a detailed description of the material culture of the Mackey homestead or other cultural resource issues pertaining to this paper are referred to Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office site form 48CA2675 and the attendant cultural resource investigation. Additional material on cultural resource issues pertaining to the Teckla area can also be found in the several cultural resource investigations that have been conducted in recent years, which are located at the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

On one level, the life and death of the Teckla homesteading community directly corresponded to events of national and international importance. Likewise, the homesteading community responded to broader events and regional conditions in ways relevant to itself. The details of the experience are to be found in both locations—in the distance and in Teckla. Regardless of the question, the story revolves around the lives and experiences of those who lived it. They are the source for understanding it. It is a story narrated by many people, which ultimately reveals the complexities of the area, initial settlement of the area, homestead life in the area, the development of community life, and the final demise of this brief episode in northeast Wyoming's history.

The outbreak of World War I triggered a substantial boom for American agriculture in the mid-to-late 1910s. Unable to satisfy their domestic needs, warring European nations resorted to American producers to supply them with necessary levels of food and fiber. Soaring prices accompanied the high demand for American farm products, and American farmers enjoyed a period of relative prosperity. American entrance in the war in April 1917 further escalated the demand for agricultural products. Farmers responded by placing thirty million previously uncultivated acres into production on the Great Plains alone. The boom continued unabated for American farmers until demands and prices dropped precipitously in mid-1920.⁴

American agriculture experienced an economic downturn in the early 1920s although the catalyst of the World War I years did sustain some farms. Many farmers in the Great Plains practiced a type of cultivation known as dry farming, indeed much of the new ground broken in the Great Plains during the First World War was devoted to dry farming. Requiring no irrigation and practiced in areas of semiaridity, dry farming methods were relatively new when the wartime boom hit, only having been seriously introduced at the turn of the century. The general aridity of the Great Plains and a severe drought in the early 1890s encouraged sustainable agricultural practices for the Great Plains, which resulted in the Campbell method of dry farming. The Campbell method, developed in South Dakota by Hardy Webster Campbell, gained respectability in the Great Plains, and was presented as a reliable farming method to prospective Great Plains settlers.⁵

The rise of the dry farming movement on the Great Plains inspired passage of the 320-acre Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, and the subsequent passage of the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Act. The 1909 legislation attempted to address the need for fallow acreage

under the Campbell method, while the 1916 legislation increased entry allowances to 640 acres to encourage stock grazing as a supplement to farming. The dry farming movement and the subsequent settlement accompanying it developed through private initiative as well as from governmental and private boosters. National planning of agriculture at the time embodied the attitude that "settlers should be free to engage in dry-land agriculture wherever topography and economy of operation favored such enterprise." Private initiative, newly developed farming methods, available public land, boosterism, and rapidly expanding farm markets formed the backdrop for settlement of places like the Thunder Basin of northeast Wyoming.⁶

Wyoming fared similarly to other states during the agricultural boom of the First World War years. Wyoming wheat production rose from 2,250,000 bushels in 1913 to 6,600,000 bushels in 1918. The agricultural prosperity of the war years was replaced by intermittent setbacks during the 1920s. Wyoming farmers faced drought in 1919, and commodity prices remained weak throughout the 1920s. Regardless, yields remained high and homesteaders continued to farm. In fact, 1919-21 were the peak years for new homestead entries in Wyoming, and the decade of the 1920s witnessed the transfer of nearly ten million acres of land from the public domain to private ownership in Wyoming.⁷

The Wyoming Board of Immigration, a state agency, aggressively promoted homestead settlement of Wyoming in 1919-20. Its campaign focused on enticing settlers from neighboring states, but ranged as far as

³ Those interested in the specific historiography of the area should consult: Dena S. Markof, "Cultural Resource Inventory: A Historical Study of the North Antelope Coal Field, Campbell and Converse Counties, Wyoming" (prepared by Western Cultural Resource Management, Inc. for North Antelope Coal Company, 19 June 1981); Robert S. Rosenberg, "A Historical Synthesis of the Eastern Powder River Basin, Campbell and Converse Counties, Wyoming" (prepared by Rosenberg Historical Consultants for Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, May, 1991); Gene Munson and David Ferguson, "Class III Cultural Resource Inventory of Tract E Adjacent to Rochelle and North Antelope Mines, Campbell County, Wyoming" (prepared by GCM Services, Inc. for Powder River Coal Company, May, 1995). Copies of these unpublished reports are available at the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

⁴ Theodore Saloutos, *The American Farmer and the New Deal* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1982), 3-4; Mary W. M. Hargreaves, *Dry Farming in the Northern Great Plains: Years of Readjustment, 1920-1990* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 10.

⁵ Hargreaves, *Dry Farming*, 1-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, 69, 102.

⁷ T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 396, 411-12, 414-15.

the Midwest. Despite the rise of homesteading in the late 1910s and 1920s, farming was still insignificant in comparison to the Wyoming livestock industry as late as 1929.

A significant number of Wyoming's dry land homesteaders failed during the 1920s. Of those remaining, most were not prosperous during the 1920s even though many homesteaders who stayed were encouraged to continue during exceptional years like 1927.⁸

The Teckla homesteading community and surrounding area mirrored the trends taking place on the state and regional level. Homestead entries flourished in the late 1910s and into the early 1920s. Settlers arrived primarily from neighboring states, established homes, and developed a permanent community. They attempted farming with mixed success and failure, and they supplemented their operations with animal husbandry. During the 1920s, a number accomplished their objectives, as is evident in the improvements and subsequent patenting of their homesteads.⁹

The experiences of twelve Teckla area homesteaders indicate the basic pattern of settlement, agricultural development, and homestead improvement. The twelve reveal the broad patterns at work in the establishment of Teckla as a homesteading community.¹⁰

Homesteaders William Mackey, Marion Reed, John Brewer, John Dillon, and Eugene Callan all filed their homestead entries in 1917. In doing so, they homesteaded during the major period of settlement in the Teckla area—the late 1910s. Five others filed their homestead entries between 1918-1921, while two filed in 1927 and 1928, respectively. Seven of the homesteaders filed their homestead entries under either the 1909 Enlarged Homestead Act or the 1916 Stock Raising Homestead Act, while five of them filed entries under both acts. Marion Reed, Eddie Corder, and three others moved to Wyoming from Nebraska, while the Crouchs hailed from Missouri and others came from places such as Oklahoma and North Carolina.

The marital status of the homesteaders and the kinship networks among the group reflected an obvious inclination toward permanent residency. Eight of them were married, while only four claimed children. The Crouchs, Mary Springer, and Joel Hamilton were widows and widowers, but they too with the exception of Springer had families among the group. The Crouchs were mother and son, while Joel Hamilton was William Mackey's father-in-law. Although Mary Springer was unrelated among this group of Teckla homesteaders, two of her sons, Stuart and Harry, and a daughter, Mrs. R. J. Holmes, all homesteaded near her.¹¹

This group of homesteaders experimented with dry-

land agriculture. While attempting to cultivate crops, they lessened their risks by raising livestock as well.¹² Seven reported cultivating between forty and forty-five acres within the first three to five years of filing their homestead entry, while one each reported cultivating twenty-two acres, fifty-five acres, and seventy-five acres. Most planted a variety of crops such as corn, oats, cane, rye, millet, flax, and wheat. Ten reported planting corn, oats, or cane at least once, while three tended to concentrate on wheat. Of those reporting, four experienced crop failures in 1919, and one reported crop failures in 1932-34. Far more common was the claim of at least satisfactory crops. William Mackey reported success with corn, cane, and wheat in 1918. Eugene Callan reported success in 1920 with corn and rye. John Crouch reported success with oats and corn in 1924. Joel Hamilton reported success with wheat in 1929.

For some, the initial physical improvements homesteaders erected on their entries, and their eventual success in patenting their homesteads demonstrated a degree of commitment to permanent residency. Regardless of the role improvements played in the legally mandated development of the homestead, they indicate serious attempts at permanent settlement. Initial improvements included permanent homes, barns and stock shelters. Other standard improvements reported

⁸ *Ibid.*, 415-16, 418.

⁹ Although as Larson points out, "Despite the spectacular acquisition of land under the homestead laws, the number of farm and ranch units increased only from 15,748 in 1919 to 16,011 in 1929, and the rural farm and ranch population increased only from 67,076 to 72,905. People who were already on the land in 1919 sooner or later came into possession of most of the newly homesteaded land." He also notes that entries and patents from 1915 to 1935 shows approximately 72,700 homestead entries in Wyoming and only 45,300 patents during that 21-year period." *Ibid.*, 416.

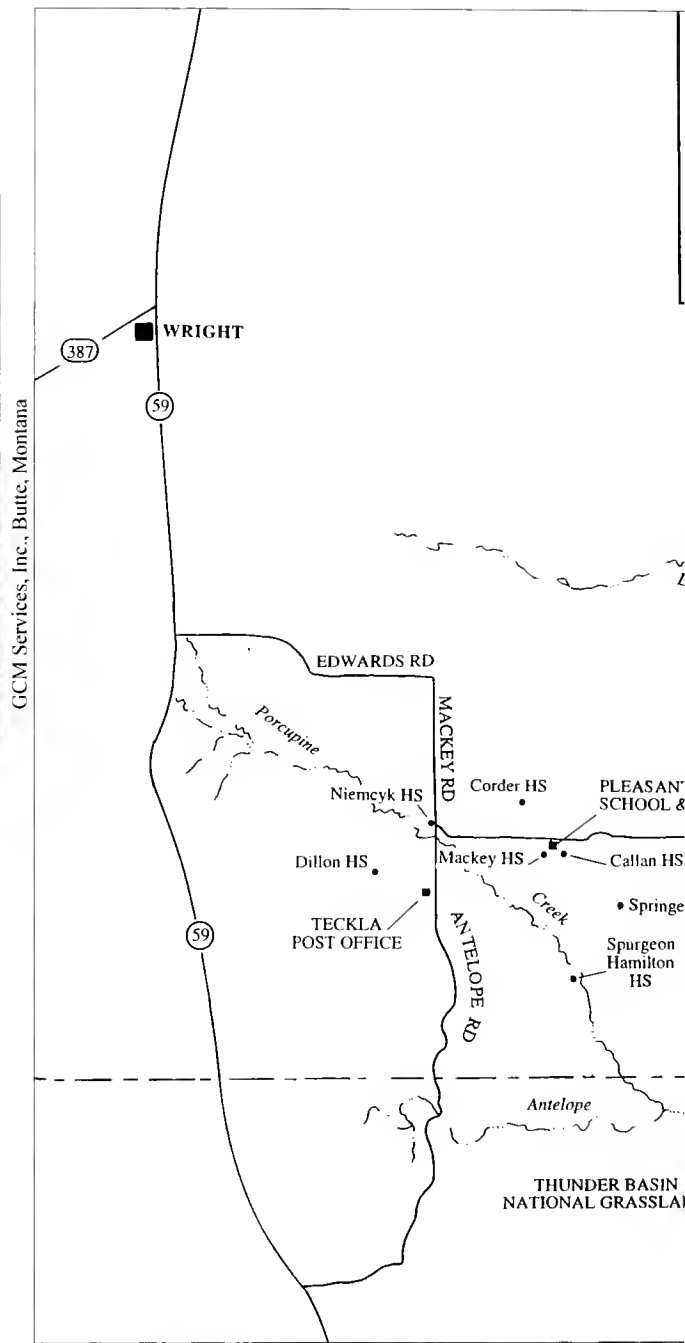
¹⁰ Post-1908 General Land Entry Files of the General Land Office, "Marion W. Reed, Wyoming, HS patent no. 862322 and 926875," "Walter Spurgeon, Wyoming, HS patent no. 922145," "Eddie L. Corder, Wyoming, HS patent no. 966074," "John E. Brewer, Wyoming, HS patent no. 870426," "William P. Mackey, Wyoming, HS patent no. 837967," "Missouri E. Crouch, Wyoming, HS patent no. 1075024," "John Crouch, Wyoming, HS patent no. 987667," "John Dillon, Wyoming, HS patent no. 827408," "Eugene E. Callan, Wyoming, HS patent no. 879163 and 895906," "Daniel A. Mack, Wyoming, HS patent no. 907385," "Mary B. Springer, Wyoming, HS patent no. 1023816 and 1046717," "Joel M. Hamilton, Wyoming, HS patent no. 1062240," RG 49. Archives I Textual Reference Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C.

¹¹ Post-1908, "Reed," "Spurgeon," "Corder," "Brewer," "Mackey," "Crouch," "Crouch," "Dillon," "Callan," "Mack," "Springer," "Hamilton."

¹² *Ibid.*; It is unknown to what degree, if at all, Teckla area homesteaders practiced true dryland farming methods.

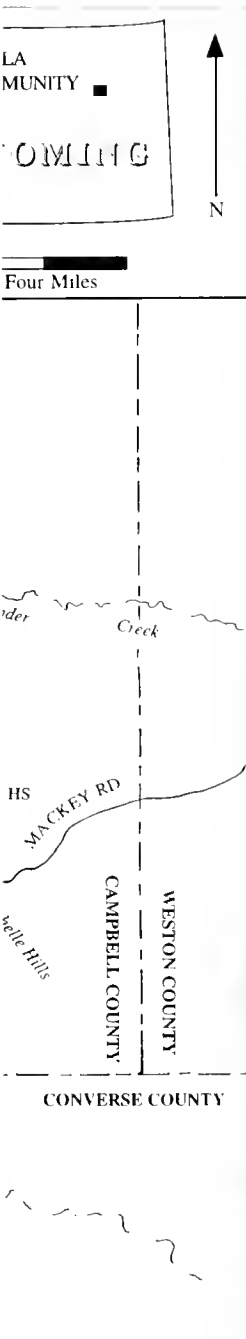


Mackey homestead ruins, 1997.



UW Agricultural Extension Service, AHC

Thunder Basin homestead, c. 1919.

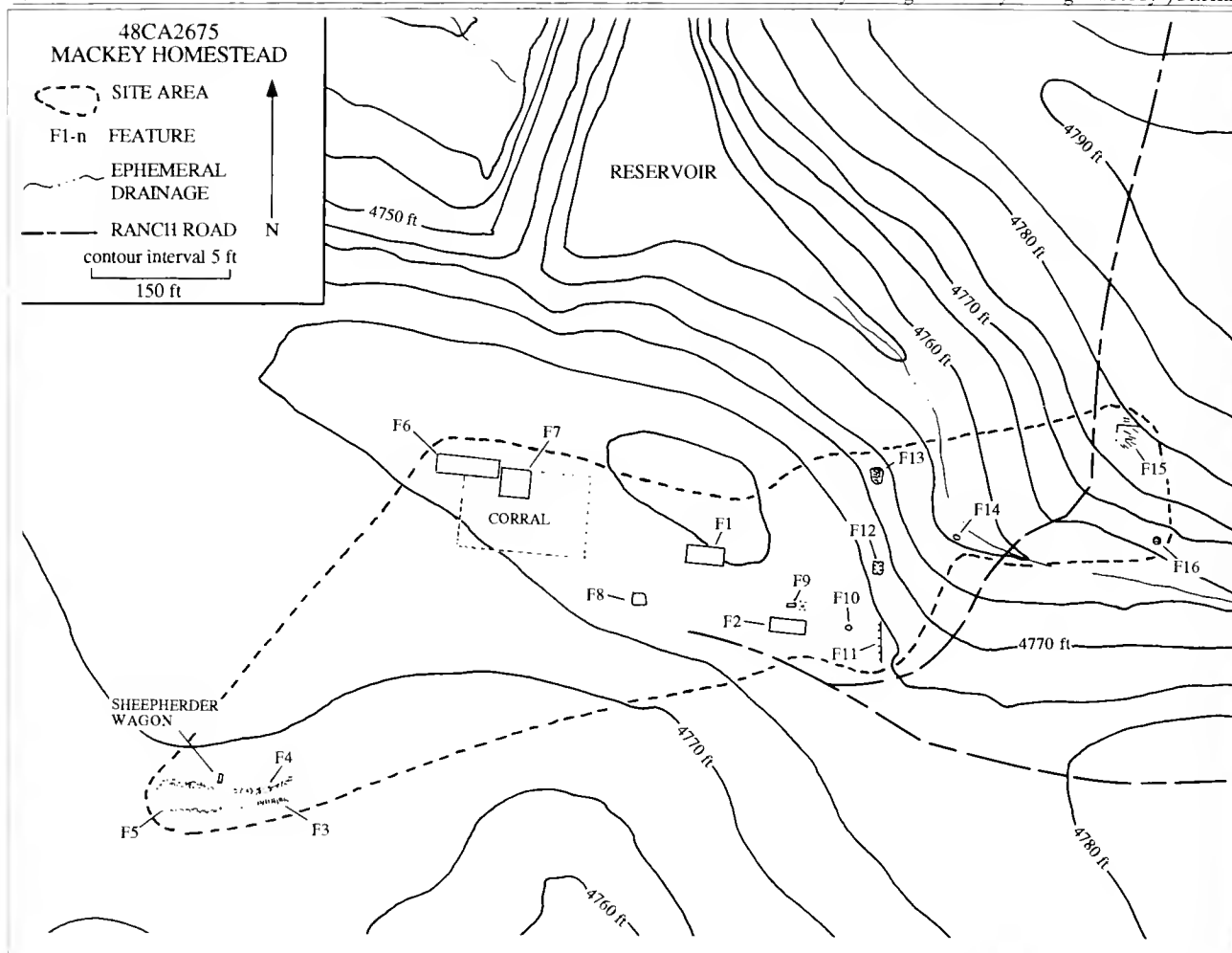


Rhoda and William Mackey, wedding photo, June 25, 1905

Photographs courtesy of Rose Mackey McLaughlin, Gillette



Mackey children in 1924. Left to right, Joe, Bess, Rose, Bob (infant), Elsie



GCM Services

by homesteaders included chicken houses, hog houses, fencing, stock reservoirs, cellars, granaries, wells, corrals, windmills, and an auto shed. Teckla area homesteaders such as the Mackeys, Putnams, Soderbergs, Niemcyks, Paynes, and Judds created the community of Teckla and, in so doing, looked to the future. The experience of the Mackey family in particular reveals many details of Teckla homestead life.

William and Rhoda Mackey, natives of Pisgah Forest, North Carolina, along with three children, Vera, William Boyce, and Rose, arrived in Gillette, Wyoming, by train on April 6, 1917. Greeted by snow, the Mackeys pitched tents on the outskirts of Gillette, and established a temporary camp before heading to their future home in the Thunder Basin. William and his brother-in-law, Gene Callan, had visited Wyoming in February, 1917, at which time they both filed adjoining homestead entries. They returned to North Carolina for their families, and returned together to Wyoming in April to establish their newly claimed homesteads. The Mackeys and Callans lived in their makeshift home on the outskirts of Gillette for about six weeks, while William and Gene prepared their home-

steads for residency. William and Gene moved their families to their new homes after building temporary, one-room, saddle-roof shacks on each homestead entry. Equipped with a new wagon, two horses, and a Ford car, the two families made the slow sixty-mile trip south from Gillette to their new adjoining homesteads camping along the way.¹³

Once on their homestead, the Mackeys immediately set about developing it. They cleared sagebrush, and prepared to begin farming. To provide for the immediate needs of the family, William found temporary employment as a sheepherder with a large local sheep operation owned by Ernest Spaeth. He apparently needed extra income, while Spaeth wittingly or unwittingly helped finance his competition for land—the homestead movement.

The Mackeys also welcomed four more children into their family, Elsie, Bess, Joe, and Bob, after their arrival in Wyoming. In addition to the growth of their

¹³ Elsie Mackey Bard, "The Mackeys Homestead in Wyoming in 1917," in *Campbell County: The Treasured Years*, ed. Campbell County Historical Society (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1991), 344.

immediate family. William and Rhoda were joined by several other relatives in Wyoming. Rhoda's father, Joel Mackey Hamilton, and two brothers, Spurgeon and Bill, as well as William's brothers, Joe and Charles, filed homestead entries near the Mackey and Callan homesteads. The Mackeys and their extended family joined others in establishing the community of Teckla.¹⁴

William had filed a 320-acre homestead entry under the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 on February 10, 1917, and an additional 320-acre homestead entry under the Stock-Raising Homestead Act on February 16, 1917. The family eventually patented both claims. He initiated the final process toward patent on his first homestead entry in 1921, and in 1922 on his second homestead entry. Teckla area homesteaders David E. Ankeny, Frank Boss, Spurgeon Hamilton, Aleck A. Soderberg, Walter Spurgeon, and Charles Mackey testified as witnesses in the various stages of final proof proceedings.¹⁵

According to the final proof testimony, the Mackey's established residence on the homestead on May 16, 1917, and planted a ten-acre feed crop of corn and cane that year. He planted twenty acres in corn, cane, and wheat in 1918, which produced a "good crop." Unfortunately, his initial success was followed by the 1919 drought, which devastated that year's forty acres of corn, cane, and rye. He recovered the next year with a successful forty-acre crop of corn and rye, and he reported a successful fifty-five acre crop in 1921. He also grazed livestock on the homestead.

In addition to the agricultural development of the homestead, Mackey also added numerous physical improvements during the early years on the homestead. By 1921, the homestead included a cellar, a barn, a corral, and two and one-half miles of fence. Significant for credit purposes, Mackey estimated the total value of all his homestead improvements to be \$1,100.¹⁶

On Mackey's second homestead entry, he described the land as generally level with native short grasses, sagebrush, and cactus. It supported at least twenty sheep, ten to fifteen head of cattle, and six to eight work horses, which also grazed on the original entry. Mackey had also erected two miles of two-wire fence supported by fence posts positioned two rods apart on his additional entry in 1919, while also digging a well and developing a stock reservoir in 1921. He estimated the value of the additional improvements at \$500, which increased the total value of improvements on his homestead to \$1,600.¹⁷

The United States Department of Interior denied Mackey's second patent pending a field investigation of the second homestead entry. Mackey appealed the

decision and sought the assistance of Wyoming Senator John Kendrick in the matter. Kendrick responded to Mackey's plea with a letter to the Department of Interior on September 9, 1922, urging a speedy resolution of the matter. He further informed the Department of Interior that Mackey sought approval for a Federal Farm Loan, which was contingent on his additional homestead patent. The Department of Interior heeded Kendrick's request, and on October 21, 1922, a field agent for the Department of Interior recommended that Mackey be issued the patent.¹⁸

The Mackeys, like so many other families in the area, settled into their life in the Thunder Basin in the early 1920s after the initial settlement shock waned. The decade of the 1920s presented a moment for Teckla area homesteaders to mature in their situation as individual homestead families and as members of a larger loosely defined homestead community. As such, the Mackey family had limited agricultural success through most of the 1920s. (The Mackey's degree of success between 1922-25 is unknown, while it obviously existed to some extent considering their continued existence and success in the late 1920s.)

The Mackey farm operation succeeded in the late 1920s through diversified cultivation, poultry raising, and animal husbandry. Mackey marketed 500 pounds of beans, 10,000 pounds of oats, 310 pounds of potatoes, forty-eight bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of corn, and 151 pounds of dressed turkeys between October and November 10, 1926. In 1927, wheat, oats, and turkeys were sold, while 1928 included the sale of oats, hogs, wheat, cattle, and turkeys. The farm produced 189 bushels of winter wheat, flax, sixty-four bushels of rye, and 716 pounds of live turkeys for sale in 1929. The sale of farm products declined in 1930 to 110 bushels of wheat, an undisclosed amount of rye and flax, and sixty turkeys, while turkeys dominated 1931 sales.¹⁹

William and Rhoda's daughter, Rose, remembered the 1920s as seemingly prosperous years on the homestead, although tempered by the basic hardships of homestead life. Rose recalled her mother raising fresh

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Post-1908, "Mackey." Mackey received the patent on his first homestead entry on December 9, 1921, and the patent on his second homestead entry on March 31, 1923.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ 1926 Farm Products Sold, 177, 1927 Farm Products Sold, 178, 1928 Farm Products Sold, 178-79, 1929 Farm Products Sold, 180, 1930 Farm Products Sold, 181, 1931 Farm Products Sold, 181, William P. Mackey Business Ledger, in possession of Rose Mackey McLaughlin, Gillette, Wyoming.

produce in large unirrigated gardens, the children tending to chickens, turkeys, and milking cows, and her father farming. She referred jokingly to herself and her siblings as "turkey herders" in reference to their surveillance of the birds while they foraged. Turkey herding also brought with it additional duties. The turkeys apparently possessed a keen sense of detecting rattlesnakes, which allowed the children prime opportunities to kill them. Moreover, turkey raising culminated in the fall slaughter with her father killing the birds, and the rest of the family plucking them. The birds were then packed in barrels and sold. The family also milked cows, and shipped the cream for sale. Rose also recalled her father farming with horses before purchasing a tractor in the late 1920s.²⁰

Rose's brother, Bob, provided additional memories about farm life from his childhood. He recalled the children's duties consisting of milking cows, feeding bum lambs, and feeding hogs. Although Bob vaguely recalled his father farming with horses, he better remembered the notoriety surrounding his father's purchase of a 1530 International tractor, combine, plow, and tandem disc in 1928. He also used the new power machinery to farm land owned by Gene Callan and Spurgeon Hamilton.

William turned to flax production in the late 1920s as its value increased. Flax prices peaked in 1929, and Mackey was positioned to benefit from the increase. The Mackeys planted about twenty acres of flax, likely in 1929, and were quite successful with it. William attempted to capitalize on his success again the next year, but the price dropped and he ended up with a "flax bin full of flax." Bob recalled his father growing a variety of crops, and hauling wheat to Gillette for sale. The Mackeys ceased crop farming in the mostly drought years of the 1930s although William planted a successful fifty or sixty acre crop of wheat around 1937.²¹

In addition to raising farm products for market, the Mackeys also produced the necessary items for their own consumption. According to Bob, "you pretty near had to raise all your food in them days." Rhoda Mackey consistently grew a large garden to supply the family with fresh produce. She grew beans, potatoes, peas, onions, carrots, tomatoes, and, on at least one occasion even watermelon. Despite her success, gardening presented risks, considering she gardened without irrigation.

The family's diet also included pork and beef raised on the homestead. In fact, Mr. Mackey consistently raised pigs, and the family ate pork "all the time." The family also supplemented its diet with wild game such as antelope. Raising the food was merely the begin-

ning of the process though, it was then followed by the formidable task of preserving it.²²

The magnitude of the task is reflected in Bob's memory that his mother seemed to be "canning all the time." Rhoda purchased bulk shipments of jars and lids, and "she canned everything." The seemingly endless task of canning garden produce and meat culminated in the "hundreds of jars of different things" she preserved. Rose recalled an additional and highly significant aspect of the canning procedure—Rhoda's purchase of a pressure cooker. Prior to the arrival of the pressure cooker, Rhoda canned with a pot of boiling water used as a hot-water bath. The hot-water bath was not only time intensive, but it also limited the number of items available for canning. Alternatively, the pressure cooker dramatically reduced the time involved in the canning procedure, and allowed Rhoda to preserve other foods such as meat.²³

The Mackeys also preserved food using other techniques. They cured pork with Morton sugar cure, butchered steers in the fall as the temperature dropped, and buried carrots in boxes of sand. They prepared their own sausage, and Rhoda also made cheese. Without an ice house or ice box, the Mackeys relied on a root cellar dug by William to store their food, although some of their neighbors did use ice houses. The cellar housed more than food though. Rose recalled the fear she and her siblings had entering the cellar, because lizards often times lurked under the cellar stairs.

Despite all their food preparation, the family occasionally endured great hardship on the homestead. In fact, Rose and Bob recalled being "a little too sufficient" on one occasion. The family exhausted their supply of flour during one particularly brutal winter storm, which forced them to use a grain pig feed called red dog to make flour until they could resupply.²⁴

Despite the aridity of the area, the Mackeys adjusted to the situation. Although the gardening and farming relied on rain alone, it came often enough during the 1920s to ensure their survival. The family also had a well on the homestead to accommodate their household needs, but they later hauled water from a neighbor's well. The well on the adjoining Corder homestead produced a premium soft water the Mackeys cherished. They valued it enough to bother with the trouble of hauling it in barrels for use on their own

²⁰ Rose Mackey McLaughlin, interview by author, Gillette, Wyoming, 8 November 1997; Mrs. McLaughlin was born in 1916.

²¹ Mackey, interview; Hargreaves, *Dry Farming*, 45.

²² Mackey, interview.

²³ Mackey, interview; McLaughlin, interview.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

homestead. Rhoda also melted snow for water in large tubs during the winter if hauling water or getting to their well was too difficult.

Homestead life also presented additional issues necessary to the well-being of the family that went beyond the questions of food and water. Kerosene, coal, wood, muscle, and batteries powered the necessities and conveniences available to the Mackey's in their household duties and pastimes. Kerosene lamps provided the Mackey's with household lighting, while they heated their home and cooked their meals on stoves fueled by coal and wood. The Mackeys joined neighbors at the nearby Canfield coal mine in the fall to gather their annual coal supply, and they collected wood in the nearby Rochelle Hills. Coal was later acquired at the East Antelope coal mine, which was operated by their neighbor Felix Niemcyk.²⁵

Muscle powered many household tasks such as washing clothes. The job entailed hauling large quantities of water by the children, and labor intensive scrubbing performed by Rhoda. The power available to them did provide recreation on occasion, too. The Mackeys purchased a thousand-hour battery radio from a mail order company after hearing one at a nearby teacher's home. With a radio of their own, they consistently tuned in Nashville's Grand Ol' Opry program on Saturday evenings.²⁶

Alternative sources of power and corresponding appliances arrived much later than the 1920s and 1930s. Electricity, wind-powered generators, and propane fueled appliances dramatically changed life on the homestead, but they arrived long after the homestead era had ended. They arrived in the late 1930s, with the advent of the REA (Rural Electrification Administration) and brought with them expanded opportunities for refrigeration, heating, cooking, lighting, entertainment and communication. During the 1920s and early 1930s, the Mackeys along with their neighbors survived with the technologies and energy sources available to them. The situation demanded great labor, yet it hardly represented something unknown to countless other rural and even urban families at the time.²⁷

Despite the "flies in the summer and the drafts in the winter," the homestead house gathered the family together for work, pleasure, and unity. The Mackeys initially resided slightly east of the location they finally established as their permanent homesite. In 1921 they moved their original homestead shack to the new location, and proceeded to establish the new homesite. They replaced their original home with a new gable-roofed house at the time of the move, which became the principal family residence. The new house consisted of a

twenty-one-by-fifteen-foot log section, and a twelve-by-sixteen-foot squared log section which was added around 1930. A porch and a lean-to were added on to the house around 1938-39. The house contained a kitchen, a living room, and another room for sleeping. The lean-to provided storage space, and they used the original homestead shack as a bunkhouse. The homesite also included a hand dug root cellar, a turkey house, barn, and a dugout chicken house.²⁸

The Mackey's situation drastically differed from that of fellow Teckla homesteader and widow Mary Springer, but Springer's lifestyle does provide insight into Teckla homestead life. Some neighbors contested her homestead patent, but Teckla homesteader James A. Payne claimed Mary Springer's home was "furnished like the usual homesteader [house]..." Her son, Harry Springer, another Teckla homesteader described his mother's home as "a comfortable log house, mudded up and well furnished." It was a fourteen-by-sixteen-foot log home with a twelve-inch dressed board floor. Protecting the home was "a good lumber flat roof covered with thick rubberoid roofing material." Within the home, Springer had a nine-by-twelve-foot rug and ample furnishings. Her furnishings included "a full bed, a sanitary couch that could be made into a full bed, a chifferobe, a birdseye maple dressing table and chair to match, a dining table, 2 rocking chairs and 2 straight back chairs." She heated the home and cooked on a stove, that reportedly "heated and baked well." In addition, she "had all [the] cooking utensils and necessary silverware."²⁹

Beyond the fencelines of individual homesteads existed the broader community of Teckla. The community was bound together by kinship in several instances, but also by a communal spirit reflected in local recreation, child rearing, and religious worship. Although community life surely existed beyond those practices, they did represent a significant portion of Teckla's community identity. For instance, neighbors joined together and collectively purchased a steam tractor to thresh grain, and they commonly acted as midwives at the births of each other's children. They also gathered for Fourth of July picnics and political rallies, while they

²⁵ *Ibid*

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Mackey interview.

²⁸ McLaughlin, interview; Mackey, interview; Robert R. Mackey, interview by author, Teckla, Wyoming, 8 July 1997. Those interested in a detailed description of the Mackey homestead material culture are referred to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office site form of site, 48CA2675, on file at the SHPO in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

²⁹ Post-1908, "Springer, 1023816."

eagerly visited the Teckla post office three times a week for mail and conversation.³⁰

William Mackey donated two acres for a site to locate a community hall and school for Teckla homesteaders. The hall accommodated various events such as dances, school programs, and religious services. Next to the hall was a school for local children to attend. Neighbors eagerly joined together to build the log hall, and they later celebrated together within its walls. Dances, a frequent form of winter entertainment among the Teckla homesteaders, were commonly held at the community hall. Music was provided by various local musicians. Nell Judd played the piano, Owen Ankeny and Ike Isenberger were on the fiddle, and a Murphy was on the drums. Couples danced waltzes, polkas, the charleston, and the two-step. Bootleggers also frequented the dances with illegal alcohol, which ended many dances in drunken brawls. Nevertheless, the dances provided fond memories for those who attended, and also provided homesteaders with a welcomed community social event.³¹

Although many dances were held at the community hall, it was also common to hold dances in certain homes. Teckla homesteader, John Dillon, hosted dances at his large frame home on numerous occasions. Strikingly different from other dances, Bob Mackey recalled that on one occasion at the Dillon home, a phonograph produced the music rather than live musicians. Former Teckla resident, Jinx Putnam, also remembered a couple dancing a finger polka at the Dillon home. He had "never heard of it since." Putnam's family hosted dances at his home when he was a child. Another neighbor, Joe Judd, hosted dances in a large barn he had on his homestead.³²

The Pleasant View school, located adjacent to the community hall, provided another form of community interaction in the fall, winter, and spring. Even though it was more directly associated with the children, the school also linked Teckla's adults together in a common enterprise. The eldest Mackey child, Vera, taught briefly at Pleasant View, while her younger siblings and neighbor children attended her classes. Former Pleasant View students, Jinx Putnam and Rose McLaughlin, recalled fond memories of their school days. It provided a welcomed opportunity to meet with other children, and develop friendships outside of the home. School also provided occasions for the children to express their talents before their families and neighbors. The school children held annual Christmas performances as well as other programs throughout the year in the community hall for the entertainment of everyone.³³



Pleasant View school children, 1925. Front row: Elsie Mackey, Edna Callan, Rose Mackey, John Reed. Back row: William Boyce Mackey, Mrs. Genevra Bird, Lyle Reed. Photo courtesy of Rose Mackey McLaughlin

Religious services occupied an additional segment of community life each summer. Although without a resident minister, many Teckla residents supported the occasional non-denominational Christian services provided by traveling preachers. Preachers traveled from Savageton, and elsewhere, to host "all day dinner on the ground" services. These services earned this name, because it would be a day-long event of preaching and eating. Visiting ministers also taught Sunday school to the children when they were available. According to Bob Mackey, one particular minister referred to as a "holy roller" disappointed him, because the man claimed he could jump over his pulpit with the joy he

³⁰ Harry G. "Jinx" Putnam Jr., "Harry G. Putnam I Story," in *Campbell County: The Treasured Years*, ed. Campbell County Historical Society (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1991), 468; Mackey, interview, 14 October 1997; Harry G. "Jinx" Putnam Jr., "The Good Old Days," in *From the Belle Fourche to Antelope: History of Southern Campbell County*, ed. Harriet Underwood (Wright, Wyoming: Wright Centennial Museum, composed and printed by Action Printing, Gillette, Wyoming, 1991), 203; McLaughlin, interview.

³¹ Putnam, "Good Old Days," 202-03; McLaughlin, interview; Mackey, interview, 14 October 1997.

³² Putnam, "Good Old Days," 202; Robert R. Mackey, interview by Gene Munson, Teckla, Wyoming, 30 April 1997.

³³ Putnam, "Harry G. Putnam," 468; Putnam, "Good Old Days," 203; McLaughlin, interview.

had, yet he never did. Summer religious services also included full immersion baptisms on occasion. Bob Mackey recalled the congregation gathering at a deep-water hole on Porcupine Creek one summer for the baptism of a few men, including the Mackey's neighbor Eddie Corder. Religion provided yet another opportunity for Teckla area homesteaders to come together as a community and celebrate the joys as well as the sorrows of homestead life.³⁴

Although commitment sustained the settlement of individual homestead families in the Thunder Basin and the community life they developed at Teckla, the continuation of the depression and the continuing droughts forced many homestead families to reconsider their future. Federal government land management policies influenced their immediate future as well as that of Teckla and the Thunder Basin. These policies reconfigured the community of Teckla. The homestead families and the Teckla community of the late 1910s through the early 1930s largely disappeared, as a new era dawned in land management and local settlement.

The continuing severe drought and consistently low commodity prices ravaged Great Plains dryland farmers and stockgrowers during the 1920s. The deterioration of conditions for dry land farmers and ranchers prepared the way for a radical transformation of American agriculture. American agricultural planners recognized that the post-war oversupply of farm products had led to failures of private initiative in agriculture in the early 1920s. They recognized the need for centralized planning of farm production and proposed various solutions. Local initiative found little fulfillment in many of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal agricultural policies and programs.³⁵

With the failures of state and local agricultural relief policy, the federal government provided federal funding and relief programs. With these changes came central planning directed by the federal government which intended to remedy perceived land use mistakes accomplished under private initiative. New Deal land use readjustment was a commitment to purchase private land for better land management. This proposal was "translate[d]...into reality on the Great Plains in the 1930s by calling for curtailing rather than increasing areas devoted to crop production." The New Deal's policy commitment "to rationalize land-use patterns and enhance economic opportunities for small farmers" manifested itself in federal resettlement programs. New Deal resettlement programs sought to purchase land deemed submarginal, reclaim it as timber or grazing reserves, and relocate the previous owners on federal resettlement projects.³⁶

Wyoming farmers and ranchers suffered drought throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. The situation was truly desperate for many. Federal plans called for a professional planner's preliminary investigation and ultimate designation of land according to its productive value. The process resulted in a Wyoming resettlement project. Unlike resettlement projects in other western states, Wyoming's funding dwindled and the project ended with only the land purchases and subsequent reclamation work. Although several families were relocated, a large scale resettlement community for displaced farmers was never fully realized in Wyoming. Nonetheless, the Resettlement Administration's Thunder Basin, Wyoming, resettlement project reoriented the future course of land management in the Thunder Basin and settlement at Teckla in particular.³⁷

The first Agricultural Adjustment Administration, a New Deal agency, initiated the Northeastern Wyoming Land Utilization Project, better known as the Thunder Basin project, in late 1934. A preliminary investigation of the Thunder Basin was conducted in August, and a field office was established in October. Administration of the project was transferred to the Resettlement and Farm Security Administration in early 1935, and development of the project quickly followed. Field agents began appraising the land holdings of persons interested in selling properties in January 1935, and a final plan to proceed was submitted in June. Project officials accepted the first purchase option from a local landowner on September 30, 1935. Presidential approval was given on January 8, 1936, and payments to landowners began February 26, 1936. The final Federal payment for a tract of land was made May 23, 1938. In three and one-half years, Thunder Basin and Teckla underwent substantial change.³⁸

The total Thunder Basin project area, which included the Teckla area, encompassed approximately 1,098,000 acres in two separate areas. The main portion of the

³⁴ McLaughlin, interview; Mackey, interview, 14 October 1997.

³⁵ Hargreaves, *Dry Farming*, 69, 102-03.

³⁶ Hargreaves, *Dry Farming*, 69, 102-03; Richard Lowitt, *The New Deal and the West* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 33-34; Brian Q. Cannon, *Remaking the Agrarian Dream: New Deal Rural Resettlement in the Mountain West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 1.

³⁷ Lowitt, *The New Deal*, 35; Larson, *Wyoming*, 418, 444-45; Cannon, *Agrarian Dream*, 1, 10-11, 6.

³⁸ Northwestern Wyoming Land Utilization Project, Thunder Basin National Grassland, (WY-LU-21), Douglas, Wyoming, [1955?], Thunder Basin Land Utilization Project Papers, USFS Permanent Records, Douglas District Office, Douglas, Wyoming (hereafter cited as Thunder Basin Papers); Thunder Basin Project, 11 June 1938, Thunder Basin Papers.

project area equaled roughly 42 by 36 square miles of land, while the smaller portion equaled twelve square miles of land. The project area included portions of Campbell, Converse, and Weston counties. Although the project only planned to purchase 274,911 acres of land, the project area represented a much larger area, because it encompassed already existing public land and tracts of land retained by private parties.

Of the 309 families inhabiting the total project area at its inception, 172 of them departed the area by July, 1940. The remaining families in the Teckla area and throughout the Thunder Basin entered a fundamentally different era than the one they left behind.³⁹

The federal government undertook the Thunder Basin project to develop "a large project to be used as an agricultural demonstration of restricted grazing."⁴⁰ The transfer of land from private property to the public domain paid landowners who otherwise would have lost everything. The program sought to bolster "economic independence and stability in the area by adjusting the population to the productivity of the land."⁴¹ The federal government also sought to reorder land use and associated agricultural life in an economically and socially viable way—something private initiative had proven incapable of doing.⁴²

County school officials believed the "Land Policy program... [would] eliminate some of... [the] smallest and most isolated schools and will therefore contribute to the general welfare of our school system."⁴³ School officials considered some rural schools to be "far from desirable."⁴⁴ The Campbell County Rehabilitation Committee supported the idea that farmers "be allowed to trade their land to the government for irrigated tracts."⁴⁵ Ernest P. Spaeth, chairman of the committee and a large sheep operator, heartily endorsed the program. Thomas A. Nicholas, a livestock operator with land adjoining the project area, believed that a "much lasting benefit in the way of stabilizing the livestock industry may be accomplished by government way of ownership of certain submarginal grazing lands." He wondered, however, "what range will be available and whether any outside livestock owners will be able to take advantage of government purchased lands to unfairly compete with us."⁴⁶

Fifty homesteaders, twenty from the Teckla area, signed a petition circulated by the Mack brothers of Teckla. The petition, submitted to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, sought a speedy federal buyout. Teckla petitioners included relatives of the Mackeys, Spurgeon and Joel Hamilton, Eugene Callan, and Joe Mackey, as well as John Crouch, R. J. Holmes, John Payne, and William Murphy. The signatories rep-

resented a common sentiment among many Teckla families. The petition stressed the "unknown misery" attributed to the previous several years of drought and debt in its endorsement of the project. Many Teckla homesteaders undoubtedly sought direct relief from any possible source in the hope that they might relocate elsewhere on favorable terms.⁴⁷

At the heart of the project was the assumption that the land use situation "could never have been remedied through private initiative or by the state or local government, and which has been the principal cause of the present social and economic distress of the population of the area."⁴⁸

"[T]he land which has been a burden to its owners, and the occupants of the area who have for many years been a burden on society, will both be rehabilitated on a permanent basis."⁴⁹ The project planners criticized "the intrusion of the homesteader in the range country." The project directors also believed "the experience of these farmers will be repeated" if they are left to themselves, because "hope springs eternal."⁵⁰

Project directors lumped social conditions together with economic conditions in the Thunder Basin, and concluded both to be "extremely undesirable." Unde-

³⁹ Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY-1, [30 June 1937?], Thunder Basin Papers; Report of Families LU-WY-38-1 Site 1 and II, 1 July 1940, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁴⁰ Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY-1, [30 June 1937?], Thunder Basin Papers.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; Resettlement Administration Land Acquisition Project Analysis Report, 28 July 1936, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Marion Heald to John A. Goe, 11 April 1935.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Willot Keyser and Vern Wolfley to Carl Bingemer, 1 August 1934.

⁴⁶ Ernest P. Spaeth, W. B. Saunders, and L. R. Underwood to Submarginal Land Purchase Program, 9 April 1935, Thomas A. Nicholas to Land Policy Section Agricultural Adjustment Administration, 10 April 1935, Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁴⁷ Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, Thunder Basin Papers; Mackey, interview, 30 April 1997.

⁴⁸ "Resettlement Administration Authorization for Preparation of Project Plan," 31 March 1936, included in Resettlement Administration Land Acquisition Project Analysis Report, 28 July 1936, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, pp.2, 43, Thunder Basin Papers.

sirable living conditions included everything from the lack of running water in homes, large families living in small homes, one "family of seven...living in a house with no floor," diet, government assistance, to the distance between homesteads and schools. It was asserted that "in no instance does a dry farmer's property listed for sale include water piped into the house." The general absence of telephones also served as a sign of social disadvantage. While recognizing "local social activities such as Literary Societies, School entertainments, and School Board quarrels and Country Dances," it was ultimately concluded that "recreational advantages are very meager." Abysmal living conditions surely existed for many Thunder Basin homestead families, although project directors were also guilty of misinterpreting the area's social and cultural life.⁵¹

Teckla families were given a choice to either stay or sell to the Thunder Basin project. Many chose to sell. As of June, 1938, 177 families had departed the Thunder Basin. Sixteen families relocated outside of Wyoming with government assistance, eleven families relocated within Wyoming with government assistance, five families awaited a funded relocation, and 145 relocated without requesting assistance.⁵²

Project officials loosely monitored the situations of families that relocated without aid. They discovered generally disheartening results—"that the majority so relocated are more or less on a 'shoe string basis'" in their new location.⁵³ Furthermore, it was reported that "many of the families who have left the state are reported as being without funds."⁵⁴ This was a significant fact indeed, considering most of the people relocated out of state to Idaho, Oregon or Washington. Only "a small majority" were able to "relocate themselves on more productive farms," while "a number" returned to previous occupations.⁵⁵

William Mackey, like some others, declared "he wasn't any better off than any of the rest... [but he concluded] where are you going to go to do any better?" He considered the government homestead purchase prices to be insufficient for a favorable relocation. Consequently, they remained and survived as best as possible on a steady diet of beans and potatoes. Far from being unaffected, the Mackey's power farm machinery purchased in 1928 was repossessed and the drought resulted in severe dust storms that forced Rhoda to hang "wet blankets over the windows" to keep the dust outside the house.

Their survival depended on their self-sufficiency, but also on public works projects. William along with many others who remained in Teckla and the Thunder Basin found employment with the Works Progress Adminis-

tration (WPA) during the depression. The WPA initiated the reclamation work central to the Thunder Basin resettlement project. Mackey and others earned a salary.⁵⁶

Public works projects aimed at rangeland development. Projects included building range reservoirs, diversion dams, cattle guards, fencing, dipping vats, corrals, rodent eradication, seeding, flood control, and contour plowing. It also included tearing down recently vacated homestead buildings, and reclaiming the homestead sites. As of June, 1938, approximately seventy-five men had been employed per month for two-and-one-half years on Thunder Basin public works projects. They demolished 112 buildings and took down 300 miles of fencing, seeded 463 acres, and built 125 impounding dams. Not all buildings were destroyed. Many were salvaged by those remaining in the area.

Other sources of income also existed in the early years of the depression and before. Several Teckla area homesteaders had produced illegal alcohol in the Rochelle Hills during Prohibition until it ended in 1933.⁵⁷

The results of the Thunder Basin project sometimes defied expectations and failed to alleviate serious misery. Those remaining were expected to be the beneficiaries of a well-ordered, centrally-managed, public-grazing reserve. Regardless of the intent, well established livestock operators were positioned to benefit from the new management policies to the detriment of small or recently established operators. Without access to a sufficient grazing allotment, some small operators simply folded. Like project participants in nearby states, many "who sold out to the government could barely hope to clear their debts, with little surplus to carry into new ventures." In fact, a monthly report in Au-

⁵¹ Resettlement Administration Land Acquisition Project Analysis Report, 28 July 1936, 1, Thunder Basin Papers; Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY- 1, [30 June 1937?], 2, Thunder Basin Papers; Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, 13, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁵² Thunder Basin project, 11 June 1938, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁵³ Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY-i, [30 June 1937?], 3, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Thunder Basin project, 11 June 1938, Thunder Basin Papers.

⁵⁶ Mackey interview, 14 October 1997; McLaughlin, interview.

⁵⁷ Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY-1, [30 June 1937?], 2, Thunder Basin Papers; Thunder Basin project, 11 June 1938, Thunder Basin Papers; Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, 27, Thunder Basin Papers; Mackey, interview, 14 October 1997.

gust, 1936 claimed the \$5 to \$1500 paid to families for their homesteads "will be exhausted in a short time, should they not be successful in locating a new home immediately." Slightly later, project officials worried about the "uncertain state" "of the necessary Resettlement for the families being dispossessed...." This was a concern exacerbated by the fact that "in most cases the only asset these families had were the farms on which they lived, and after land sale money had been received... and debts adjusted very little was left, in some cases nothing."⁵⁸

The story of Teckla represents a significant moment in the history of northeast Wyoming's settlement and land management history, as well as the nation's response to these issues. The story reveals the variety of situations, lifestyles, and events homesteaders experienced on the terms of those who lived it—the families, individuals, and neighbors who, with conviction, staked their claim in the Thunder Basin. Of utmost importance, it reveals the transition Teckla underwent during the 1930s as homesteaders willingly accepted federal relief.

New Deal relief alleviated the immediate distress of many, yet the results were ambiguous when examined over a longer period. The project addressed some immediate concerns, yet many continued to endure hardship. The Mackeys and others knew a different story. They knew a life of hardship and success balanced by personal commitment and community support. It was

also a lifestyle recognizably susceptible to risk. The risks overwhelmed many during the 1920s and 1930s, but not to the discredit nor the validity of their earlier experience. They settled a difficult region, yet adjusted themselves to it with trial and error and, in the process, created a community.

⁵⁸ Submarginal Land Program Agricultural Demonstration Projects, Wyoming, Proposal No. A-1 Sites 1 and 2, Thunder Basin Northeast Wyoming, Final Plan, 15 May 1935, 21, Thunder Basin Papers; Cannon, *Agrarian Dream*, 6, 11; George Darlington, "Reflections, Opinions, & History of the Douglas Ranger District," Douglas, Wyoming, [1991?], 6, 11-12; Hargreaves, *Dry Farming* 122, 103; Resettlement Administration Monthly Report On Families Residing On Land Utilization Projects, 1 August 1936, Thunder Basin Papers; Land Use Summary Report for Project LA-WY-1, [30 June 1937?], 14, Thunder Basin Papers.

William Fischer is a doctoral student in American history at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D. C. He completed this article as part of a project with GCM Services, Inc., a cultural resource management firm, and with the financial support of Powder River Coal Company.

VISIONS BEYOND 'AN ARROW OF FIRE':

WYOMING'S PENDRAY AND THE OTHER ROCKET EXPERIMENTERS



American
Heritage
Center

G. Edward Pendray

BY DAVID L. ROBERTS

G. Edward Pendray came from a part of America where the word "pioneer" made a lot of sense. Pendray described himself as "a product of the homestead surge of 1906-12 in western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming."

In a 1926 letter with *New York Herald Tribune* letterhead, Pendray wrote to a Wyoming friend, "I know homesteads and homesteaders... I write of almost nothing else when I am in a serious mood... No matter how long I stay in New York, I shall never be anything but a Westerner. Some day I hope to figure out how to make my living in Wyoming, so I can come out to live again on my prairies."¹

Born in Nebraska in 1901, Pendray grew up on a Wyoming ranch in the Van Tassell area, between Lusk and the Nebraska community of Harrison. He attended the University of Wyoming in the early 1920s and served as editor of the campus newspaper, newly named *The Branding Iron*.

Pendray was a "pioneer," but not in the way that the word traditionally had been applied to someone from the rural West. In fact, he did most of his "pioneering" efforts in the East where he became a pioneer in American rocketry and space exploration advocacy.

Upon one return to Lusk, he treated residents to a public presentation. While some people viewed him as "eccentric" and considered his ideas to be "far out," especially for that time period, many people marveled at his knowledge and predictions about science.²

After completing graduate studies at Columbia University, Pendray went on to work for the *New York Herald Tribune*, serving in a number of positions: reporter, assistant city editor, picture editor and science

¹ G. Edward Pendray, letter to Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, Nov. 24, 1926, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

² Interviews with Lusk, Wyoming, residents by the author.

editor. He also served as science editor for the *Literary Digest* magazine.

In 1936, he joined Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company as assistant to the president, developing a public relations program and a technical journal. One of Pendray's projects was the Westinghouse World's Fair exhibit that included a "time capsule," which, according to biographical information at the University of Wyoming American Heritage Center in Laramie, was a term he "coined."³

He left Westinghouse to start his own public relations firm in New York. Among his other accomplishments: he served as editor of the *National Public Relations Journal*; he developed the Guggenheim Jet Propulsion Center at California Institute of Technology

and the Guggenheim Laboratories at Princeton University; he wrote non-fiction and science fiction books. His early advocacy of space flight and his pioneering work designing and experimenting with liquid propulsion rockets was truly remarkable.

Pendray and his wife, Leatrice, helped found the American Rocket Society in 1930. The first gathering of the small group of mainly writers who would begin the organization occurred in the Pendrays' apartment in New York City. Most contributed science fiction articles to Hugo Gernsback's *Science Wonder Stories*.

Three years earlier, the word "astronautics" had been coined by a French science fiction writer, who also joined friends in Paris to form a committee to promote space flight.⁴

Like the French group, Pendray and the Americans were drawn together by the one, shared dream—the prospect of sending vehicles into space. As writers, they knew how to gain publicity for their cause. They planned promotional activities, presented information about every aspect of spaceflight at their meetings, and published related material in a publication edited by one of the society's members.

The transition from discussion to experimentation began when the Pendrays traveled to Europe in 1931 to visit European rocket experimenters. In Germany, they observed a test firing of a liquid-fuel rocket motor and were extremely impressed. They left Berlin with an agreement that the German and American rocket organizations would exchange information.⁵

³ Biographical sketch of G. Edward Pendray, June 1967, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

⁴ Frank H. Winter, *Prelude to the Space Age, the Rocket Societies: 1924-40* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 25.

⁵ Beryl Williams and Samuel Epstein, *The Rocket Pioneers, On the Road to Space* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1961), 177.



Pendray papers, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Libraries

Pendray (center, wearing hat) visits German rocket facility, April, 1931. During the visit, Pendray and colleagues were impressed by the test firing of a liquid-fuel rocket motor.

The American Rocket Society's first rocket was constructed in 1932 at a cost of \$49.40. In a November trial launch in New Jersey, the rocket launch failed because of the rain and other problems.

The society's first rocket to actually lift off went up 250 feet in 1933. A more respectable showing was the organization's last rocket, which flew to 1,338 feet in 1934. After that, the group devoted its limited resources to more practical tests in which rocket engines were fired on stands and closely observed for data collection. The testing proved fruitful in the study of a variety of techniques and devices.⁶

The organization became the largest professional rocket engineering group in America. It merged with another group in 1963 to form the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, tallying a membership of 20,000 from the aerospace industry.⁷

The rocket societies were the "roots" for the modern Space Age. Frank Winter, historian of the National Air and Space Museum's Science and Exploration Department and author of the 1982 book *Prelude to the Space Age: The Rocket Societies, 1924-1940*, said the relationship between the early rocket societies and today's space program was very important.

"These groups laid the groundwork for later rocket research in several ways," Winter said in a 1982 article. "First, they helped to educate the scientific community and the public in general. The societies were largely responsible for keeping alive the idea of traveling into space, despite constant skepticism.

"Second, the rocket societies helped train some of the best minds around—men who became leaders in the space program a few decades later. It would be impossible to estimate how many young people were motivated by these rocket societies."⁸

In 1958, Pendray was a consultant to the Select Committee on Astronautics and Space Exploration of the U.S. House of Representatives, and aided in the establishment of NASA.

One of Pendray's older contemporaries was Robert H. Goddard (1882-1945). Goddard is now known as the father of American rocketry, and NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland was named in honor of him.

By 1909, Goddard had worked out the theory of the multi-stage rocket and, with more than 200 patents from 1914 until his death, he had covered almost every conceivable aspect of rocket design, propulsion and guidance.⁹

However, during his lifetime, Goddard received scant recognition for his role in rocket science, largely because of his work for the Navy, which demanded se-

crecy, and his own preference to work as a secretive researcher. His reluctance for publicity was probably understandable, following the furor that Goddard had suffered in the 1920s. On Jan. 12, 1920, a story "Believes Rocket Can Reach Moon" in the *New York Times* featured an essay by Goddard.

The following day, in an editorial, the *New York Times* ridiculed Goddard for making the same "mistake" as science fiction author Jules Verne by suggesting that a rocket could function in a vacuum. (The *Times* officially apologized decades later, in 1969, when Americans landed on the moon and proved Goddard to be correct.)

By 1921, sensational news stories had featured nearly 20 people volunteering to go on a rocket to the moon. Goddard had been both praised and lampooned. In an effort to dispel the clamor and put the "human cargo" idea in practical perspective, Goddard again spoke to the press, explaining about the extreme temperatures on the moon and other problems. The resulting news story was titled, "Moon Beams Would Cremate Human Rockets," setting off another round of sensational news articles.¹⁰

Thus, Goddard stopped granting interviews and refused to give comments about his activities.

Many of his calculations about space flight were securely put in a locked file, with instructions that they were to be "opened only by an optimist."¹¹

In the meantime, however, reactions overseas to his views were much different. Germany emerged with a serious interest in rocket development, thanks to Professor Hermann Oberth. Mrs. Goddard recalled, "Many foreign nations, including Russia, Japan, Germany and Italy, wrote to my husband asking for his services, but he turned them all down even though he received little support from his own government after World War I."¹²

The ridicule persisted. In 1929, Goddard launched his liquid-propellant rocket named "Nell" which successfully performed as expected. However, one news-

⁶ Frank H. Winter, *Rockets Into Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 39.

⁷ Biographical sketch, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

⁸ Rita Bobowski, "When the Space Age was but a glimmer in a dreamer's eye," *Research Reports*, National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C., Spring 1982, 4-5.

⁹ Arthur C. Clarke, *The Promise of Space* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1968), 16-17.

¹⁰ Shirley Thomas, *Men of Space. Profiles of the Leaders in Space Research, Development and Exploration* (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1960), 32-33.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35.



Pendray (right) on inspection trip to German rocket facilities, 1931.

paper headlined its story about the launch, "Moon Rocket Misses Target by 238,799 1/2 Miles."¹³

So, in 1930, to escape publicity, Goddard moved his rocket experiments to the remote town of Roswell, New Mexico.

The beginnings of experimental work by Pendray and his group of rocketeers in the American Rocket Society did not stem directly from Goddard's work. Pendray wrote, "When Goddard in his desert fastness in New Mexico proved uncommunicative, those of us who wanted to do our part in launching the space age turned to what appeared the next best source of light: the German Interplanetary Society in Berlin."¹⁴

Like others who saw Goddard as an enigma, *Time* magazine sourly noted in a 1944 article, "Because Goddard has published little on his findings and has experimented mostly in the privacy of a New Mexican desert, fellow rocketeers consider him a 'mystery man'."¹⁵

Time magazine added, "No astronaut, Professor Goddard has restricted his aim to rather low altitudes."

In defense of Goddard, Pendray fired off a protest to the editor: "Your reporter evidently has not read Goddard's classical report on rockets published in 1919 by the Smithsonian Institution. This is the monograph

that reopened rocket experimentation and really started the modern era of rocket research."

Pendray said that Goddard's brilliant theoretical analyses clearly qualified him for better treatment. "Goddard was not only an 'astronaut,' as you call them, but actually started the whole modern cycle of astronautics. He is the spiritual leader (of all rocket experiments) in the '20s and '30s."

Goddard greatly appreciated Pendray's response.

For that evaluation of Goddard, Pendray was ahead of his time. Pendray also was ahead of his time because of his belief in space travel, his rocket society leadership, and his own active work in rocket experimentation.

Later, he wrote *The Coming Age of Rocket Power*. With the assistance of Goddard's widow, Pendray edited *Rocket Development: Liquid-Fuel Rocket Research, 1929-1941*, a book dealing with Goddard's experimental work; and helped edit and prepare for publication, *The Papers of Dr. Robert H. Goddard*.¹⁶

In a chapter he wrote in the 1964 book *The History of Rocket Technology*, Pendray cited the successes of Goddard's pioneering efforts:

—First to develop a rocket motor using liquid propellants (liquid oxygen and gasoline, 1920-25);

—First to design, construct, and launch successfully a liquid-fuel rocket (March 16, 1926 at Auburn, Mass.);

—First developed gyro-stabilization apparatus for rockets (1932);

—First used deflector vanes in the blast of the rocket motor as a method of stabilizing and guiding rockets (1932);

—Received the first U.S. patent on the idea of multi-stage rockets (1914);

—First explored mathematically the practicality of using rocket power to reach high altitudes and escape velocity (1912);

—First to publish in the U.S. a basic mathematical theory underlying rocket propulsion and rocket flight (1919);

—First proved experimentally that a rocket will provide thrust in a vacuum (1915);

—Developed and demonstrated the basic idea of the "bazooka" during World War I (November 9, 1915), though his plans in the U.S. Army files were unused until World War II;

—First developed self-cooling rocket motors, variable-thrust rocket motors, practical rocket landing de-

¹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁴ G. Edward Pendray, author of chapter "Pioneer Rocket Development in the United States," in Eugene M. Emme, ed. *The History of Rocket Technology, Essays on Research, Development and Utility*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964), 24.

¹⁵ Harry Wulforst, *The Rocketmakers* (New York: Orion Books, 1990), 148-150.

¹⁶ Biographical sketch, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

vices, pumps suitable for liquid rocket fuels, and forecast jet-driven airplanes, rocket-borne mail and express, and travel in space.¹⁷

Goddard flight-tested 31 rockets in New Mexico. One reached 7,500 feet in 1935; another, the same year, attained more than 700 miles an hour.¹⁸

Goddard was issued 48 patents for basic rocket hardware. After Goddard's death in 1945, an additional 131 posthumous patents would be granted to his widow, for a total of 214 patents.¹⁹

"The work of Dr. Goddard, of course, underlies all modern development in rocketry and space flight," Pendray wrote, adding that the efforts of the American Rocket Society's "Experimental Committee and independent experimenters served to develop a vital body of knowledge about what will and will not work in this new field of technology."²⁰

Pendray said the efforts brought forth people with experience and know-how who were ready and willing to take leadership positions in the modern rocket and missile age. He wrote, "And perhaps equally important, the early rocket experiments helped to promote an ever-mounting pitch of interest and enthusiasm, and stirred large portions of the human race to desire the eventual conquest of space—thus generating the broad public support which for any great and costly new project is a vital necessity for success in a democratic society."²¹

While advocates and scientists of the early 20th century, such as Goddard and Pendray, were important in laying the groundwork for the modern Space Age, by no means did they "invent" rockets.

Rocket use, mainly as fireworks, dates back more than 1,000 years ago in China.

The Chinese "arrows of fire" were improved upon by Arab military men about 1280 A.D. One innovation was described as an air squid or traveling land mine—the weapon would scurry across land in the manner of a squid through water.²²

While the gun was the preferred firearm in Europe, war rocket use flourished in India from at least the mid-1500s.

In Europe, one of the first major military uses of rockets occurred during the 1739 battle for the Isle of Chiozza in Italy, when rockets set afire an almost impenetrable fortress.²³

The Congreve era of rocketry propelled the expansion of the rocket as a weapon. British Colonel William Congreve wrote, "In the year of 1804, it first occurred to me, that as the...rocket is exerted without any reaction from the point of which it is discharged, it

might be necessarily applied, both afloat and ashore, as a military engine. I knew that rockets were used for military purposes in India, but that their magnitude was inconsiderable, and their range not exceeding 1,000 yards."²⁴

According to Frank H. Winter's book *The First Golden Age of Rocketry*, Congreve discovered that, like cannon balls, ranges of rockets could be increased and predicted according to the angles at which they were discharged. He developed ways to make the rockets more exact and more powerful.

While the first use of the Congreve rockets in combat ended in failure for the British, the second combat use, against the French, proved successful.

Winter noted that there is no evidence that the Congreve rockets changed fundamental military tactics. However, the rockets did give an edge to the element of surprise. The primary tactical value was psychological—to demoralize the enemy, according to the Winter's book. The twisting, "hissing projectiles, usually flying at threateningly low levels, terrified untrained troops, native warriors, and cavalry horses."²⁵

Congreve's rockets were utilized frequently by the British against America during the War of 1812.

The most famous moment was during the bombardment of Baltimore's Fort McHenry in September of 1814 when lawyer Francis Scott Key immortalized the spectacle of "the rocket's red glare" in a verse in what later became the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner."²⁶

In August of that same year, rockets scored their biggest victory at the battle of Bladensburg, Maryland. In retaliation for American destruction of York (later Toronto), the British colony of Upper Canada in 1813, the British attacked America's capital of Washington

¹⁷ Emme, *The History of Rocket Technology: Essays on Research, Development and Utility*, 21.

¹⁸ Winter, *Rockets Into Space*, 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁰ Emme, *The History of Rocket Technology: Essays on Research, Development and Utility*, 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²² Bruce Ketcham, managing editor, and Ralph C. Martin, chief editor, *Rocket and Space Science Series: Volume 1—Propulsion* (Indianapolis: Amateur Rocket Association, Howard W. Sams and Co., Inc., The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ Frank H. Winter, *The Golden Age of Rocketry* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 15.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, xiv, preface.

²⁶ Wernher von Braun and Frederick I. Ordway III, *History of Rocketry and Space Travel* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1975), 31.

and ultimately burned the White House. The American troops, ill-prepared and hastily recruited for defense of Washington, were outmatched by the professional British troops experienced in fighting Napoleon's forces in Europe.

Winter's *The First Golden Age of Rocketry* described the account:

Surveying the movements of the opponents from afar were three men on horseback: President James Madison, Secretary of War James Monroe, and Attorney General Richard Rush. British troops approached the Bladensburg Bridge and attempted to force their way across with a sudden discharge of rockets. American guns responded immediately and swept down almost an entire company of British infantry. The British survivors instantly took refuge behind a nearby warehouse; among them were the rocketeers, who again fired rockets. Secretary Monroe saw the projectiles "fall near the President" and Attorney General Rush afterwards wrote, "Their rockets flew over us as we sat on our horses." President Madison discreetly advised his ministers to retire to the rear of the American lines. American General Winder rode along the line encouraging his men to disregard the rockets, but instead, his troops panicked at the sight and the horrible hissing sound of the weapons as the British aimed them with increasing accuracy. The 5th and 24th Baltimore regiments simply fled the field. The British at once stormed over Bladensburg Bridge; Washington lay before them unprotected. The U.S. Capitol building was burned the night of August 24, 1814. Dolly Madison bravely retrieved some of the White House treasures before the British arrived. Law books and other combustibles were said to have been piled up against the White House and other buildings, and fired at by the rockets. The State, War and Navy buildings were all destroyed, and the Capitol was gutted.²⁷

The war rockets that Congreve had developed through the years "ranged from a small 12-pound rocket carrying a charge of 48 carbine balls to a 42-pound rocket that carried a carcass charge weighing 18 pounds or a spherical bomb that weighed 12 pounds," according to *The Rocket Pioneers on the Road to Space* by Beryl Williams and Samuel Epstein.²⁸

In the 1840s, Englishman William Hale introduced major improvements for war rockets. The Congreve and Hale rockets appeared in three major U.S. conflicts: the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War. The introduction of the breech-loading, rifled gun in the 1860s was a technological advance in weaponry that would replace the war rocket.

However, rockets were also used to help save lives. Winter's book explained the use:

On the terrible day of December 29, 1807, the British frigate Anson foundered off Loe Bar near Heiston, England. The Anson crew of 100 lost their lives in a futile attempt to swim the short distance to the shore amidst crashing waves while Helston's horror-stricken villagers stood on Mount Bay's rocky cliffs and watched helplessly. One witness was Henry Trengrouse, a Heiston cabinetmaker, who worked over the next decade developing a reliable, practical, life-saving apparatus that included, in addition to the rocket, a pulley line and hawser; cork life vest and bosun's chair, to be hove over the line; rocket launcher; modified military musket; lifeline; and a wooden sea chest for carrying it all. The rescue rocket was used to carry an attached lifeline over a ship in distress. The line was secured to the vessel's mast and the shipwrecked were conveyed to safety by a lifebelt.²⁹

Fireworks, weapon, rescue apparatus, and space vehicle—the rocket kept designers dreaming about possibilities. And the Space Age became a beneficiary of those dreams.

From Wyoming, G. Edward Pendray was one of the dreamers. He was one of the designers and experimenters.

As a boy growing up on a Wyoming ranch, Pendray must have looked with awe and wonder at the stars in the night sky. Throughout his life, he enjoyed an excitement about science and discovery.

Pendray and the other rocket experimenters envisioned more for the rocket than just an "arrow of fire." They looked into the future, and saw the wondrous possibilities of a path to the stars.

²⁷ Winter, *The Golden Age of Rocketry*, 24-26.

²⁸ Williams and Epstein, *The Rocket Pioneers on the Road to Space*, 23.

²⁹ Winter, *The Golden Age of Rocketry*, 225 and 228.

David L. Roberts founded and published the Medicine Bow Post in Medicine Bow, Wyoming, and served as its editor and publisher for 11 years. Roberts was born in Lusk, Wyoming. This story about G. Edward Pendray and the rocket experimenters is adapted from one of the chapters in his forthcoming book, "Dateline: Outer Space, A History of NASA's Journalist-in-Space Project."

Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

With My Own Eyes: A Lakota Woman Tells Her People's History. By Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun and Josephine Waggoner. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. *xl + 199 pp. Illustrations, chart, maps, index. Cloth, \$35.*

It is a great pity that the authors of this illuminating little volume never got the chance to see it in print. Both died more than fifty years ago. A collaborative effort of two mixed-blood Lakota women, *With My Own Eyes* tells the story of the Oglala and Brulé people over a period of approximately thirty years, from the 1850s to about 1880. Bettelyoun and Waggoner submitted their manuscript to the Nebraska Historical Society in the 1930s, but for the reasons which follow, the Society's editors deemed it unfit for publication. Historians and other scholars often made use of it in the following decades, but now, *finally*, due to the conscientious scholarship of Emily Levine, the book has been published for the benefit of a wider audience.

What the editors of their day found objectionable we have reason to celebrate. As Levine points out in her introduction, Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun and Josephine Waggoner wrote from a privileged viewpoint. As mixed-bloods, they could see and interpret history from both Indian and white perspectives. Bettelyoun, in particular, also benefitted from the close proximity of her family to these events. Her father, French-American fur trader James Bordeaux, operated a trading post near Fort Laramie during the critical years of the 1850s and 1860s. He was at hand during the famous "Mormon cow incident" that led to the deaths of Lt. John L. Grattan and those under his command. In fact, Bettelyoun's father buried these soldiers. Members of her family were also close at hand during the several engagements in the 1870s. Her brother, Louis Bordeaux, was an eyewitness to the death of Crazy Horse.

Proximity and perspective made the manuscript valuable. Mari Sandoz, then a Nebraska Historical Society employee, made strenuous efforts to get the work into print, but a succession of Society editors faulted the prose and questioned its historical accuracy.

In a very real sense, Bettelyoun and Waggoner failed in their quest for publication precisely because of their hybrid approach. The manuscript *does* reflect the grammar and syntax of Native speakers. Perhaps even more distressingly to the editors of their day, the narrative emphasis reflects the oral tradition. Names and dates are occasionally in error and the chronology is circular and repetitive rather than linear. But the underlying significance of events shines through with great clarity. Levine has properly chosen to preserve the prose in its original form, while standardizing the punctuation. Factual errors are unobtrusively treated in endnotes. The authors related marvelous stories told to them again and again by kin and tribal members. For contemporary readers these stories are all the more important because they reflect the values and perspectives of the authors themselves.

One should not conclude, however, that this work necessarily reflects American Indian or even Lakota viewpoints. It is more accurate to note that Bettelyoun and Waggoner brought a mixed-blood perspective to their narrative—a world which, as Levine notes, remains practically unrepresented in Native American historical literature. A later chapter on Crazy Horse and Spotted Tail nicely illustrates this tendency. Both warriors receive sympathetic treatment despite the contradictory nature of their lives and philosophies in confronting the tide of white settlement. The authors saw value in both resistance and accommodation.

Regrettably, Bettelyoun and Waggoner elected to close their account with the subjugation of the Lakota people in the 1880s. The concluding chapters contain only a few interesting comments on the repression of Indian artwork and traditions. One can only wonder how much richer this treatment would have been if the authors had recorded their insights about the humanitarian reform movement and the boarding school environment.

Warren Metcalf
University of Oklahoma

Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade. By Susan Calafate Boyle. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. xix +236 pp. *Illustrations, tables, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index.* Cloth, \$45.

Frequently neglected in traditional accounts about the Santa Fe Trail, Hispano merchants played a significant role in the complex global trade network of which the trail was a part. Crafting a variation on commercial capitalism that fit well the unique circumstances of a frontier borderlands economy, New Mexican *comerciantes* survived, prospered and contributed in large measure to the expansion of trade that followed the U.S.-Mexican War. These enterprising nineteenth-century Mexican and Mexican-American merchants are the primary focus in *Los Capitalistas*, a short but solid study by Susan Calafate Boyle.

Boyle notes that, with Mexican independence in 1821, New Mexican traders hoped a new regime in Mexico City would offer the kinds of material aid Spanish colonial rule had never provided. Instead, when not stifling trade with bureaucratic minutiae, shifting laws and regulations and high import duties, the central government continued the neglect of its colonial predecessor. Meanwhile, Captain William Becknell and other Americans "opened" the Santa Fe Trail, which brought relatively inexpensive, higher quality merchandise into New Mexico and fostered a growing economic dependence on the United States.

While Hispano merchants slowly turned their attention toward the east, Boyle finds that traditional trade patterns remained central to their activities until the late 1830s. The Santa Fe trade cannot be considered solely in terms of the route between New Mexico and Missouri. Traders ventured far into the Mexican interior on El Camino Real, doing business in major mercantile centers such as Chihuahua, Durango and Zacatecas. Yet, to compete with Americans and other foreigners on El Camino Real, as well as the Santa Fe Trail, New Mexicans found they had to build extensive commercial networks in the United States.

Not even the disruptions of war between Mexico and the United States in the 1840s had a serious impact on New Mexican merchants' relationship with American mercantile interests. Although records are incomplete and thus inconclusive, Boyle argues that it is likely that New Mexicans, while perhaps not controlling the Santa Fe trade, were indeed major players. Beginning in the years prior to the war, Hispano merchants contributed significantly to the introduction of mercan-

tile capitalism in New Mexico. To underscore this point, Boyle devotes one chapter to Felipe Chávez, an eminent New Mexican merchant with broad connections in the United States. In addition to profits from the trade, Chávez probably amassed additional wealth through mining, sheep raising, crop agriculture, store keeping, real estate, freighting and supplying United States army posts. The career of this pioneer mercantile capitalist, Boyle claims, "was exceptional but not unique." (p. 88) Unfortunately, in the decades after the Civil War, as Boyle demonstrates with U.S. census records, Hispano merchants saw their assets and opportunities decline as Anglos consolidated their economic and political supremacy in New Mexico Territory.

As Boyle concedes in her conclusion, *Los Capitalistas* is not a definitive study of the Santa Fe trade. Yet, her book fills some important gaps in the economic and social history of nineteenth century New Mexico. Bringing Hispano merchants into the discussion enriches our understanding of the Santa Fe Trail and the trading network for which it provided a vital link. From Spanish, Mexican and New Mexican territorial and state archives to the personal papers of Hispano merchants, Boyle's research is impressive and well-focused. *Los Capitalistas* would be a useful selection for upper-division and graduate-level courses in the American West or Borderland studies. In addition, aficionados of the Santa Fe Trail will be pleased by Boyle's effective placement of that icon of Western lore in an appropriate historical context.

Frank Van Nuys
University of Wyoming

My Chosen Trails: A Wyoming Woman's Recollections Through the Twentieth Century. By Verna Burger Davis. Golden: Deep Creek Press, 1998. 218 pp. *Illustrations. Paper, \$12.95.*

Verna Burger Davis' memories reach across Johnson County, Wyoming and beyond. She began life in what we consider a "simpler" time, and her memoir begins with stories of her childhood. The mountain picnics, the playhouse in the shed attic that was safe from boys, her first teachers and the town flood are all recorded. Her teaching experiences in rural schools and as a music teacher reveal her concern and appreciation for everyone she has met and worked with. She includes some surprises, too, like the explanation of gypsum burning that created the plaster for white walls; the

pack rat who visited her classroom; hauling eggs to her mountain home; and a description of living above the clouds.

Her brave adventures in furthering her musical education in Chicago, spending a summer in Yellowstone National Park and spending another summer on a dude ranch surprise the modern reader who may think that travel for education and jobs is a recent trend. She provides lots of comparisons that allow us to think about changing times: the differences in the classroom, the differences in high school athletics, the differences in family holidays, the differences between Chicago and Wyoming.

The book does not contain an index and has only one map. The photographs are clear, but there could have been more. On the positive side, Mrs. Davis shows an immense appreciation for her western landscape. Her descriptions of the Powder River country, the Big Horn Mountains, and the community of Buffalo, Wyoming, provoke clear images and reveal her love for this part of Wyoming. For people not familiar with Buffalo history, she adds today's names to describe old locations.

I have heard some of her stories before, and I have read the book before, too. This time I read *My Chosen Trails* as more than a collection of sweet stories. It is well written and a good read. It is a reminder and an acceptance of changing times. As Mrs. Davis looks forward to the next century, she has provided us a special peak into the past. *My Chosen Trails* does what a local history should do.

Patty Myers
President, WSHS
Director, Platte County Library

Hollow Victory: The White River Expedition of 1879 and the Battle of Milk Creek. By Mark E. Miller. Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998. xviii + 249 pp. *Illustrations, maps, appendices, bibliography, index.* Cloth, \$27.50.

The Battle of Milk Creek was the unfortunate consequence of an incompetent Indian agent, Nathan C. Meeker, forcing his will on the Utes of north central Colorado. As a result, Meeker and ten other whites were killed. In the ensuing military battle and siege at Milk Creek, one U.S. Army officer, Major Thomas T. Thornburgh, nine enlisted men and three accompanying civilians died, and forty-four others were wounded. The attacking Utes suffered a corresponding number of

casualties. Both the massacre at the Ute agency and the Milk Creek fight could have been avoided.

In *Hollow Victory*, Mark E. Miller presents a fresh view of this bloody chapter of Indian wars history. Rather than dwelling on the chain of events that led to conflict at the White River Agency, Miller focuses his attention on the battle, the subsequent siege and the march of the relief column that ended the ordeal. Over the years a considerable body of literature emerged about the Milk Creek fight. Unfortunately, according to the author, the broad range of participant observers led to "confusion that permeated the historical record." Miller's purpose is to set straight much of this ambiguity.

Miller aptly points out the unique features of the battle in the annals of Indian War history. Many Ute warriors who fought the soldiers actually had served as their allies in the 1876-77 Great Sioux War. Besides being the longest sustained fight between soldiers and Indians - 142 hours - Milk Creek was one of the most decorated battles of the Indian wars with eleven Medals of Honor, sixteen Certificates of Merit and four legislative resolutions issued. All of the soldier casualties were caused by gunshot; the bow and arrow was not a factor. Another sidelight, just before the fight began, Colorow, a Ute leader, played cards (monte) as the Utes awaited the soldier advance. Thornburgh's soldiers then rode into an ambush and were encircled for days by the triumphant Utes. Interestingly, the first troops riding to the rescue, Captain Dodge's Ninth Cavalry company, received the imperiled command's desperate call for help not by fast-riding courier but by a note pinned to a sagebrush by the roadside.

Hollow Victory also gives the reader additional source materials in several valuable appendices. Besides the usual official reports, a thorough list of civilian and military participants and casualties is presented. Several men found here had later connections with Fort Robinson, Nebraska, history. In Appendix C, "Citations for Bravery at Milk Creek," Pvt. Eugene Patterson received a Certificate of Merit for bravery. In Table C.2, "Selected Indian Wars Campaign Medals," Caleb Benson, a Ninth cavalryman who arrived with Dodge, was later issued Medal No. 1485. Both men later served at Fort Robinson, and both Patterson's certificate and Benson's medals are on display at the Fort Robinson Museum.

The author freely admits his is not the last word on the Milk Creek battle. He encourages further archeology to substantiate details about the fight and the routes and campsites used by the troop columns. Readers wanting to find out what happened at Milk Creek will

welcome this book, as well as those with a frontier military interest looking for a good source book on a noteworthy and intriguing Indian wars conflict.

**Thomas R. Buecker, Curator
Fort Robinson Museum
Nebraska**

Old Fences, New Neighbors. By Peter R. Decker. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998. xxiv + 159 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

Tucked away in the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado, Ouray County is no stranger to boom and bust. Although Ouray County's landscape reveals scarcely a trace of its original Native American inhabitants who were dispossessed here in the 1800s, the legacy of silver mining and cattle raising is clearly visible in many portions of this mountainous county. Ouray County has a number of characteristics that link it to the rest of the Rocky Mountains, including a rigorous climate and marginal economy that conspire to weed out all but the most tenacious of year-round residents. Located far from the major interstates, Ouray County still has a "pioneer" character that is classically Old West.

Observing in the preface that "... the past can be an unpleasant place if it does not conform to present-day myths that have been created from it," Decker promises that he will not shy away from the less saccharine side of history, including tales of alcoholism, debilitating accidents and bankruptcy. This, one senses quickly, will be far less sentimental than many popular histories. Decker next provides a relatively unvarnished overview of the county's history since the mid-nineteenth century, briefly relating the transition from fur trapping to the silver mining booms and the displacement of the Ute Indians. Ouray County became, by about 1890, one link in the chain of American urban-industrial development, as evidenced by the creation of its county seat and most prominent town, Ridgway. Decker also describes the homesteading that occurred here and alludes to the powerful federal presence as much of the county's land is held in the Uncompaghe National Forest.

This is not a traditional county history, for portions of it have an autobiographical tone that helps personalize the story. This is especially true of the more recent history that is also covered. Because the author was a former academic who changed careers in the 1970s to make a go at ranching, he relates the recent

history using personal anecdotes. This type of autobiographical perspective is becoming increasingly common in writings about the West published by university presses. Although it helps to sell books aimed at a broader market, some of these autobiographies work better than others. Happily, *Old Fences, New Neighbors* is one of those books in which autobiography lends credibility without pretense.

Decker does not preach, nor is he mawkishly sentimental. Instead, he relates an interesting story about one relatively small county in the West that has broader implications for the entire West. In retrospect, autobiography is the only technique that would work so well. In the process of becoming a rancher, Decker learned many things worth sharing about the people and land of Ouray County. He has a great eye for detail, yet never loses sight of the broader picture. With wit and candor, Decker describes his family's efforts in light of community/county dynamics and larger changes sweeping the ranching industry. This is a bittersweet story, for after a quarter of a century, Decker finally came to the realization that he and his family could no longer live in the place they had grown to love. Decker's experience - the inability to hold out in the face of changing markets, rising costs and rising taxes - has been acted out many times as locales make their transition from Old West to New West. The tribulations that faced Decker individually were also faced by the community collectively. In other words, the general character of the West is changing because the individual characters are changing.

One might suggest a few items, such as additional illustrations and an index, that could have made this book even better. Nevertheless, its has a spartan quality that is in keeping with its sobering theme. Tersely written and yet very easily read, this book could have wound up as a harangue against the newcomers. But instead of yet another academic or journalist diatribe about the transition away from ranching, logging or mining - enterprises that many of these same critics excoriated just a few years ago - Decker tells the story with a sense of understanding. In sharing many lessons he learned from the history of this tough landscape, Decker puts a human face on the transitions sweeping Ouray County. *Old Fences, New Neighbors* is refreshing yet rich in pathos. It provides an important vignette in the changing character of the West, reminding us once again that regional history is, after all, local history.

**Richard Francaviglia
University of Texas at Arlington**

Wyoming's Territorial Sheriffs. By Ann Gorzalka. Glendo: High Plains Press, 1998. 336 pp. *Illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index. Paper, \$14.95.*

Ann Gorzalka has found rich material in the stories of the 61 men who served as sheriffs, elected and appointed, in pre-territorial and territorial Wyoming. This exhaustively researched, colorfully written and generously illustrated book reveals much about the diverse individuals who served as lawmen. At times, the narrative is hampered by a dearth of analytical rigor and an uncritical acceptance of traditional and sometimes inaccurate perceptions of law and order in the Old West. Yet, the book's comprehensive and textured portrayal of criminal justice during Wyoming's formative years merits a wide audience.

It is perhaps not surprising that biographies about early Wyoming's law officers tell us much about the territory itself. These men possessed sufficient influence and respectability to be appointed or elected to an office with substantial law enforcement and tax collection duties. The sheriff was the premier agent of law and foremost symbol of government in Wyoming's remotely-bordered counties. Sheriffs served terms of two years and were limited to no more than two terms in succession. Some, like Uinta County's Samuel Dickey, went on to serve in the state legislature or in other municipal, county, state or federal offices.

Gorzalka's detective work sketches a mixed group with varying backgrounds and allegiances. Many had been born in eastern and midwestern states, and a substantial minority were immigrants from England or Scotland. Particularly fascinating are the sheriff's occupations before and after public service: freighting goods across the region, running general stores and more specialized mercantile establishments, working for the Union Pacific, mining, practicing law, raising cattle and sheep and working as stock detectives. Despite their integral roles in the territory's nascent establishment, the sheriffs sometimes betrayed divergent sympathies. Most typical was a loyalty to the large cattlemen and other incorporating range and business interests, as with Johnson County's Frank Canton and Albany County's Nathan Boswell. But other sheriffs, such as Elias Ulysses Snider and William Angus, both of Johnson County, sided with the small settlers.

Gorzalka is usually scrupulous in attempting to present both sides of a story, but she tends to oversimplify the question of law and order. In this

narrative, Wyoming was innately lawless during its early years. Lawbreakers were dastardly blemishes on the social order. Sheriffs were courageous warriors who upheld civilization in a wild country. Vigilantes stepped in when unbridled criminality became a problem and law enforcement was distant or non-existent. "It was a time without guidelines or jails. Even vigilantes did not seem interested in enforcing the laws." (p. 190)

These romantic images of the Old West remain powerful and contain some strands of truth, but they often fail to do justice to the complexity of the historical record. In fact, the vigilante committees in 1868 were as much about political and economic competition in newly established communities as they were about lawlessness. Lynchings in Wyoming in the 1880s resulted not from frontier anarchy but from particularly heinous murders and concerns about the enforcement of the death penalty law, the conflict over the control of the range and the sustenance of white supremacy over Chinese amid labor competition in the coal mines. Gorzalka strongly favors the establishment perspective, particularly in her treatment of the Johnson County War (pp. 235-238, 251-253). But more recent scholarship has questioned many aspects of the large cattlemen's version. An approach that treats the Johnson County episode in the context of long-term class conflict over the incorporation of the range is more useful than one that frames the confrontation in terms of lawfulness/unlawfulness. Both sides, the large cattlemen and the small settlers, were willing to bend the law for the promotion of their property interests.

On a minor note, the text contains several errors. A man named Moritz was hanged by a vigilante committee in Laramie in 1868, not in 1888 (p. 54), and lynchers hanged Henry Mosier in Cheyenne on September 17, 1883, not in 1888 (p. 52).

Despite these caveats, this is a well-researched and fascinating volume that will be of interest to many students of Wyoming history.

Michael J. Pfeifer
Evergreen State College

King of the Western Saddle: The Sheridan Saddle and the Art of Don King. By Timothy H. Evans. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998. 72 pp. *Illustrations, bibliography. Cloth, \$25.*

There has been an ever increasing interest in the evolution of the western saddle and the makers of these unique American tools. Articles and books on the subject universally feature three problems: a scarcity of primary source data, a lack of thorough research skills and a lack of training or study at the university level which seldom prepares museologists, historians and curators to be knowledgeable in this interesting field of study.

Timothy Evans has carefully eliminated some of the research problems noted above by using primary source data gathered from the subject of this book, Don King, and other artisans mentioned in the text. The author shows an appreciation of the research problems by addressing an area where an intense focus can be brought: a study of a modern saddle type and one of the major saddlemakers who developed this saddle. Evans has provided a pleasing combination of interviews and photograph to illustrate saddle and tooling patterns.

The book begins by taking the reader effortlessly through a brief history of western saddle types and leather workers. Later, the book provides details about Don King's life which includes accounts of his development as an artist and how this development resulted in the evolution of a distinct modern saddle type.

Future historians who may disregard contributions of hobbyists, collectors or even saddlemakers can learn from the author's collaborative approach.

Evans' study generally discusses the subject artisan, Don King. Born in Douglas, Wyoming, King traveled with his father, an itinerant cowboy, and learned to work as a cowhand and learned a variety of ranch-related jobs. Like many cowboy/saddlers who preceded him, King observed/admired fancy carved cowboy saddles and even "hung out" at famous saddle shops like Porter's Saddlery in Phoenix, Arizona. Later, in his home state of Wyoming, he began to do consignment saddle work for other well-known saddlers like Rudy Nudra and Otto Ernest of Sheridan, Wyoming.

King gradually developed the Sheridan style saddle, which is a type of saddle carving rather than a unique type of saddle construction. This carving style, developed in the years 1955-85, features small flowers in a dramatically detailed layout surrounded by leaves and stems with designs that flow around the flowers in a

repetitive fashion. The flowers and leaves on a Sheridan layout do not have a noticeable beginning or end but move in circles. This latter concentric approach is not new, but what is new is the precisely detailed carving. The old west saddlemakers who featured floral tooled saddlery, like Main and Winchester and Visalia of California and F. A. Meanea and J. S. Collins of Cheyenne, Wyoming, tried to cover a large area of leather with one flower and a couple of leaves. King and practitioners of the Sheridan saddle style seem to move in the opposite direction of the old school. They fill a small space with as many flowers and leaves as possible and do it with work which emphasizes detail.

Master saddler Tony Holmes of Cheyenne, Wyoming, once said that there were no new ideas in saddlemaking, "just modifications of old ideas." King has borne out the Holmes' theory.

The book should be of interest to saddle collectors, historians and leather-carving enthusiasts. This text is very readable in a short space of time but the readers will find themselves going back repeatedly to the illustrations and beautiful, detailed photographs of saddles. This work is a good starting point for study of this twentieth century Sheridan saddle type and should generate discussion among collectors and other saddlemakers.

James Laird
Laird's Western Americana
Santa Fe, N. M.

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Wyoming Picture



Wyoming Division of Cultural Resources

All but two of the U. S. Presidents since Grant have visited in Wyoming. (Exceptions are Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison). Pictured is President William Howard Taft who campaigned throughout Wyoming in 1911. During that tour, Taft made speeches at Cheyenne, Laramie, Rock Springs, and Newcastle (where he spoke from the steps of the newly constructed Weston County Courthouse).

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Summer 1999

Vol. 71, No. 3



On the Cover

When famed Wyoming photographer J. E. Stimson visited the Tetons in the summer of 1922, he shot a number of scenes that he later "colorized." The front cover is a photograph he made with this process of hand-tinting. He titled it "Teton Peak from the outlet on Leigh's Lake, 1922." The original photograph is held in the J. E. Stimson collection, Wyoming State Archives, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Cheyenne.

This Special Issue: The Tetons

This special issue features four articles on the Grand Tetons. Historian Robert W. Righter assesses the role of the National Park Service in influencing the man-made environment of Grand Teton National Park. Tamsen Emerson Hert provides a "travel narrative" to historic sites in the park area. Mark Harvey assesses the ongoing controversy as to who was the first person to climb the Grand Teton. The dispute between Nathaniel Langford and William Owen brought heated exchanges between them and their respective supporters over the years. Sherry Smith concludes this special section with an account of Verba Lawrence, a long-time

Jackson Hole resident who kept a journal of her life.

This issue also includes our regular features. This issue's "Wyoming Memories" is an account of an unusual animal visitor to these parts--a hyena. Long-time Society member Ellen Mueller tells us the story. Our "Wyoming Portrait" in this issue is of pioneer ranchman R. S. Van Tassell. The biography is written by Cheyenne historian Shirley E. Flynn.

With this issue, Annals returns to "timely" publication. Readers can expect to see the issue appear during the season indicated on the cover.

--Phil Roberts, Editor

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in "Wyoming Memories" also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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RENESSELAER SCHUYLER VAN TASSELL

By Shirley E. Flynn

Good Old Van. If a man can be measured by the company he keeps, Renesselaer Schuyler Van Tassell stands at the highest mark. His admirers ranged from a 12-year old kid poking about the streets of Cheyenne in 1868, to President Theodore Roosevelt during his visits to Wyoming in 1903 and 1910. He was a "man's man," ramrod straight and steady in business. With a gleam in his eye, he loved life and lived it to the fullest.

Born in 1845 in Comstock, New York, of Dutch ancestors who had arrived in the New World about 1630, Van Tassell came west before there was a Wyoming Territory or a Cheyenne. He had spent the earlier years of his manhood in Iowa. By 1865, he was at Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory, the leader of a party of 15 men who were headed westward along the proposed route of the Union Pacific Railroad. They smelled opportunity.

The stubborn post commander, Major John Talbot, detained the adventurers because he did not regard it safe for a party of only 16 men to travel into the Indian-infested country to the west. Talbot required Van Tassell to enlarge his party to 50 men before he would allow the expedition to set out for Wyoming country. After meeting that requirement, the party ventured west. Talbot himself almost immediately resigned his commission and arrived in Cheyenne, Dakota Territory, in 1867, before the railroad.¹

In 1866, Van Tassell, in the company of Tom McGee and John Sparks, wintered on Sherman Hill. They cut ties for the Union Pacific around their headquarters at Tie City, a camp near the foot of Cheyenne Pass at the point where today's Happy Jack and Telephone roads join. The railhead of the Union Pacific did not reach Sherman Hill until 18 months later.

Very little regarding Van Tassell's brushes with the Indians is known. He did relate that on one occasion when he was pursued by Indians, he shot his horse and used the carcass as a bulwark behind which he shot at his attackers until help arrived.²

What is known, however, is that his partners, Tom McGee and John Sparks, were stalwart men, too. McGee took a homestead in the area where the trio

hacked ties and developed a ranch that he passed on to his son Bert. Sparks moved west to put his roots down in Nevada where he became governor. The town of Sparks is named after him.

Van Tassell, then 22 years old, settled in Cheyenne as soon as the town was founded and engaged in freighting and stock raising. He had a contract to carry mail between Cheyenne and Fort Collins before a railroad connected the two towns.

A 12-year-old youngster poking around Cheyenne, George E. Lemmon, arrived in Cheyenne with his family a few weeks after the first train whistle in November 1867. As a footloose kid, he moseyed about the dusty railhead and in later life remembered:

R. S. Van Tassell was about the youngest man in business in Cheyenne. He was in the livery business with one Gline, the firm of Gline and Van Tassell. He owned a little black race horse that stood pat for his size but was a little flighty, and one day in a race, Johnny Gline (son of the partner) riding, he bolted at the outcome, throwing Johnny into the judges stand, cutting a big gash on Johnny's head and rendering him unconscious for some time.³

Van Tassell always relished fleet horses.

James A. Moore, also early in the Cheyenne area, was a certified hero of the Pony Express. His route was from Midway Station, halfway between Fort Kearney and Cottonwood Springs, to Julesburg, a distance of 140 miles. On one memorable ride, Moore found his relief rider unable to ride, and he immediately turned around and rode back doing 280 miles in 22 hours. For this Ben Holladay gave him a gold watch and a certificate for his remarkable performance.⁴

¹ Talbot's obituary, *The Wyoming Tribune (Cheyenne)*, July 13, 1910.

² Van Tassell's obituary, *Douglas Enterprise*, April 14, 1931.

³ George L. Lemmon Stories, WPA project, Vertical file 242, Wyoming State Archives division, Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Cheyenne.

⁴ Moore's obituary, *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, December 16, 1873.

The cattle industry was in an embryonic stage in the early 1870s. To fulfill contracts to furnish beef to the various military posts in Wyoming territory, early stockmen trailed longhorns up from Texas and turned them out to graze on the nutritious short grass. The cattle flourished. The owners quickly found that they could go into their herd and find acceptable beef for sale ten months of the year. Moore was among this group and it was said he was second only to John W. Illiff in the number of cattle he had in Wyoming in the early 1870s.⁵

Moore also was a partner in the Great Western Corral, the most extensive stabling establishment in the west. It could accommodate 250 horses and 200 wagons. The corral covered half a block.⁶ This vast operation served as a teamster terminal, a market place for horses of all kinds, a rough hostel and a stage line terminal. It easily outdistanced the Gline and Van Tassell operation.

Van Tassell put in with the more successful man and soon was freighting for him, although he presented himself as a partner.

Moore prospered, but died tragically on December 14, 1873, in Sidney, Nebraska, "after a protracted illness of about three months occasioned by injuries received in fall from a load of hay... Suffice it to say that in all the relations of life, he has proven himself worthy of confidence and esteem."⁷ In addition to a fine reputation, Moore developed by hard work the JM ranch south of Lusk, Wyoming. His town house was an elaborate mansion on Ferguson Street (now Carey Avenue) in Cheyenne, where he lived with his wife and two children. His will stipulated that the family was to continue to live in Cheyenne, which he considered his home.⁸

"Van Tassell began his business career in a livery stable. He bettered his condition immeasurably by marrying Jim Moore's widow. He succeeded not only to his

widow, but also to his 9,000 head of cattle, his range on the Running Water, and the J Rolling M brand, together with the privileges, prerogatives and prerequisites appertaining there to."⁹ He moved into his new wife's home and embellished it with stained glass and chandeliers. However, this was still raw Wyoming; one morning a horse thief was found hanging from a cottonwood tree by their front door.

The 1870s found Van Tassell engaging extensively in cattle raising--with his major holdings formerly those of James Moore--on the Running Water in what is now Niobrara County and on Pole Creek in Laramie County. The latter became known as the "home ranch" and was about 23 miles northwest of Cheyenne.

Van Tassell also operated the Union Pacific stock yards at Cheyenne for more than 40 years. During this period he provided feed there for millions of sheep and cattle.

The 27-year-old Van Tassell hosted an impromptu meeting of five men in his livery stable in 1872. According to John Rolfe Burroughs in *Guardian of the Grasslands*, "it is reasonable to suppose that the

aforementioned meeting, which was held for the purpose of forming a vigilante committee to cope with cattle thieves, took place on his premises. The name of one of the participants has been lost to history, but it is important that, in addition to Van Tassell, John H.

⁵ John Rolfe Burroughs, *Guardian of the Grasslands: The First Hundred Years of the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association* (Cheyenne: Pioneer Printing & Stationery Co., 1971), 36.

⁶ E. H. Saltiel and Geo. Barnett, *History and Business Directory of Cheyenne and Guide to the Mining Regions of the Rocky Mountains* (Cheyenne, Dakota: L. B. Joseph Bookellers and Publishers, 1868), 26.

⁷ Moore's obituary, *Daily Leader*.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ William H. Barton, ed. *Early Cheyenne Homes - 1880-1890* (Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Dept., 1983), 29.



R. S. Van Tassell

American Heritage Center

and Thomas F. Durbin and Charles F. Coffee were present."¹⁰ The Durbin brothers and Coffee were charter members of the Livestock Association of Laramie County, Wyoming, which later metamorphosed into the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. These were the men who really started the ball rolling in the direction of a permanent, viable organization of cattlemen in the State of Wyoming. Their immediate concerns were two fold, first to plan the roundups and second to control the rustling. Young Van Tassell stood with the leaders at the opening bell.

Perhaps it was because he always stepped back and surveyed the scene before plunging in, or because during these years he was younger than most other businessmen, or because he was away working, Van Tassell is not mentioned in Stock Growers files until he formally joined, six years later, in 1878. He never took an official role in the organization, although he appears to have been a proud member. His obituary states, "He took an active interest in the association throughout his life."¹¹

Mary Moore Van Tassell died of consumption in Boston on December 5, 1883, and is buried in Cheyenne. In 1888, her children, Blanche and Granville, placed a stained glass window in the newly built St. Mark's Episcopal church and dedicated it to her memory; it is inscribed FAITH.¹² Renesselaer Van Tassell assumed her property.

Soon Old Van was off to other things. "If the old rascal had one eye out for women who were as lonely as they were attractive, he apparently had the other eye peeled for the main chance because, when his wife died, he married Louise, the daughter of wealthy stockman Alexander H. Swan."¹³ Although Van Tassell seems to have been a bit opportunistic in this, he had a head for business and during the cattle boom years of the 1880s, he was accounted very wealthy.

For the nuptials, the Presbyterian church in Cheyenne, decorated by many choice and elegant floral designs, provided a sumptuous backdrop for the bride. She was attired in a white costume of *faïlle français* with a court train and bodice trimmed with pearls. The reception was in the Swan home. The newspaper reported that after a wedding trip to California, "they will reside at the handsome stone residence on the corner of Nineteenth and Ferguson streets. This handsome building was the gift of the bride's father to her."¹⁴ She was 22, and he was 41.

The hard winter of 1886-1887 and the economic debacle that followed were only months away. By spring, both Van Tassell and his father-in-law were totally devoid of assets. Their cattle perished in the winter bliz-

zards. According to George Lemmon, Van Tassell had \$150,000 in liabilities. It is to his credit, truly the mark of the man, that he refused to repudiate this obligation. Not only did Van Tassell live to pay off every cent of his debts, but he is said to have ended up with a finger in every lucrative business pie in Cheyenne.

Van Tassell and his young wife, Louise Swan, never took possession of the monumental stone house. Since Alexander Swan could not pay for its construction, the property reverted to the contractor, Robert W. Bradley. He sold it to David D. Dare, a dashing photographer/businessman who appeared on the scene. Known as Castle Dare, the house immediately gained landmark status. However, Dare fell on hard times and could not pay for it either. Possession again reverted to the contractor, and Bradley moved in with his family of three, Florence, Walter and Maude.

Van Tassells came into possession of the J. B. Thomas property in August 1892. The mansion complex had been designed for the Thomases by George D. Rainsford. It consisted of the mansion, a greenhouse and the carriage barn, situated on half a block of spacious lawn, at what was then the end of East 17th Street. The barn sported hard wood floors and stalls. One summer day, friends gathered to pick over two hundred pounds of grapes from the greenhouse vines.¹⁵

As the troubles between the Wyoming Stock Growers Association and the small ranchers in Johnson County escalated in early 1892, Van Tassell, "one of the inner ring of sooners who had long ruled the affairs of the Association, was sent to Colorado to buy horses for the expeditionary force, a move made to bypass the questions which would certainly be asked if any Wyoming ranch owners started working their horses so early in the year."¹⁶ Who better to send than Old Van with his connections in both the Association and horse trading circles? Tradition says he secured 400 horses from a dealer in Longmont, Colorado.

¹⁰ Burroughs, 35.

¹¹ Van Tassell's obituary, *The Wyoming Tribune*, April 15, 1931.

¹² Shirley E. Flynn, *Our Heritage: 100 Years at St. Mark's Cheyenne, Wyoming* (Cheyenne: Pioneer Printing, 1968), 87.

¹³ Lemmon, loose sheet in Vertical File 242, Wyoming State Archives.

¹⁴ *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, December 10, 1886.

¹⁵ Gladys Powelson Jones, *The First Hundred Years, 1886-1986: The Van Tassell Carriage Barn, National Register of Historical Places* (Cheyenne: Cheyenne Artists Guild, 1986), 6. For a biography of Dare, see William H. Barton, "David D. Dare and the American Dream," *Annals of Wyoming* 51 (1979), 8-23.

¹⁶ Helena Huntington Smith, *The War on Powder River: The History of an Insurrection* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 191.

"Castle Dare," the Cheyenne home originally given to Van Tassell and his second wife as a wedding present. Ironically, it was where his third wife Maude Bradley, daughter of its builder, was reared.



Dept. of State Parks and Cultural Resources

The Van Tassell name surfaces again in the legend of the missing copies of the second printing of A. S. Mercer's *Banditti of the Plains*. Mercer, the Cheyenne newspaperman who started out sympathetic with the "invaders" in their vendetta against the "rustlers and nesters" of Johnson County, turned coat. His book lambastes the Invaders. A first printing of 1,000 copies sold quickly and a second larger printing was ordered from a plant in Denver, but it never reached Mercer's office. Speculation was that the shipment was either hijacked along the way and burned or stored in some secret place. Certainly the Stock Growers' interests did not want the secrets it contained out on the street! Through the haze of whispered gossip, one name consistently surfaces in the disappearance of the hot books, "an agent of the cattlemen, R. S. Van Tassell, destroyed them. The name at least is specific. And through all the hearsay, the persistent smell of burning."¹⁷

Old Van was listed as a member of the Cheyenne Club during its heyday. He seldom attended. According to Burroughs, he was never a part of the arguments, fracas and denouements of its more flamboyant members such as John Coble, the Oelrich brothers, Frederic deBillier and Hubert Teschmacher.

One of Van Tassell's hobbies was always to have a handsome black saddle horse name "Gypsy." A consummate horseman, as fine a figure of man on horseback as ever rode the ranges, he never--for 50 years--was without a favorite mount thus named.

On May 30, 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt and a party of ten rode horseback from Laramie to Cheyenne. They changed horses at the Tie City ranch of Tom McGee. The President proceeded at a rousing clip as he lead the way with only one member of the party at a time riding beside him. As the party came in sight of the east slope, looking down into the valley through which the Colorado and Southern Railroad runs, Old Van appeared. He turned to the President and said, "The road forks here. That way (indicating a road running around the head of the draw) is a long way around, but we can cut off a couple of miles by taking this trail. Which shall we take?" Acknowledging that the resident rancher knew the territory, the President answered by saying, "Lead the way." Van dug his spurs into his horse and started down the rough and rocky trail. One member of the party remembered that some of the group tired along the way and when the pace became faster, cussed Old Van to a turn.

The group arrived at the Van Tassell "home ranch" on Pole Creek at 12:45 after a three hour and forty five minute ride covering 40 miles. "At Van Tassell's a bountiful repast was served, the President having a hearty appetite after the gallop through the hills. A jolly hour of rest was spent after the meal, and the President and escort again took horse to Cheyenne."¹⁸ The Presi-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹⁸ William Chapin Deming, *Roosevelt in the Bunk House, and Other Sketches*, 2d ed. (Laramie: Laramie Printing Co., n.d.), 41.

dent thanked his host and called him a "Mohawk Dutchman" in reference to his New York state heritage.¹⁹

Colonel Roosevelt, as he chose to be addressed after leaving the presidency in 1908, returned to Cheyenne in 1910 where he was the guest of honor at Cheyenne Frontier Days. His visit lasted several days. One evening, he and a small escort took a circuitous route by horseback through Fort D. A. Russell, then over the plains to the northeast heading for the Pole Creek sheep and cattle ranch of Senator Francis E. Warren. Arriving just as the sun was dropping down behind the Rocky Mountains, the President reached the ranch house on the run, his horse heaving as if it had been engaged in a race, which indeed was what had happened.

"Riding with Roosevelt was Renesselaer S. Van Tassell, a pioneer cattleman of Cheyenne, then nearing seventy years of age, straight as an Indian, a magnificent horseman and one of Frederic Remington's favorite subjects, as delineated in his character sketches of the West. As Roosevelt and Van Tassell drew nigh, the former, gazing admiringly at Van Tassell, said, 'The old rascal tried to beat me.'"²⁰

Businesswise, Van Tassell seized the moment; however, sometimes the moment seized him. George Lemmon, the kid on the Cheyenne streets in 1867 who grew into a respected stockman in South Dakota, related that, after the hard times in the late 1880s, Van Tassell, "got even with a lot of property on hand and good credit, and from about 1889 to 1902, he had practically every business in Cheyenne that was a live business - these in addition to his range cattle."

Van Tassell solidified his holdings, or those inher-

ited from his first wife. Beginning with a small homestead on the Running Water Creek near Lusk in the 1870s with cattle running on the open range, he acquired thousands of acres of the range and developed an appreciation for the land. Observing that cattle could not live on the open range without supplemental hay, he began to buy land along the creeks where grass could be harvested for winter feed. He advocated the care of rangeland. Like an early day environmentalist about 1910, he said, "I won't live to see the day, but many of you will, when people will regret that they ever plowed up this buffalo grass sod."²¹ During the 1930s, ranchers lived to see that day.

Lemmon ended up his assessment of Van Tassell, "Good Old Van - I have had lots of business deals with him and every one of them satisfactory, I guess to both."²²

In addition to the Cheyenne Stockyards, Van Tassell operated one in Green River. He sold coal from his Cheyenne headquarters at 15th and Eddy Street, now Pioneer Avenue. Several of his business journals and check registers are in the Wyoming State Archives. Written in beautiful script, they indicate the extent of his business operation and the elite manner in which he lived.²³

¹⁹ A. C. Guernsey, *Wyoming Cowboy Days* (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1936), 81.

²⁰ Deming, 3.

²¹ Burroughs, 261.

²² Lemmon papers, Vertical File 242, Wyoming State Archives.

²³ Van Tassell ledgers, journals and check stub books, Collection H58-59, Wyoming State Archives division, Parks and Cultural Resources Department.



Van Tassell accompanied Theodore Roosevelt on rides in southeastern Wyoming during both the 1903 and 1910 trips made by the "Rough Rider's" trips to Wyoming.

Van Tassell belonged to the Cheyenne Club, the Fort D. A. Russell Officers Club (dues: \$1 per month) and patronized the best shops in town. Both Van Tassells had dentistry work done by Wyoming's premiere dentist, Dr. Peter Appel in January 1909; the bill was \$201.50.

He bought 119 head of cattle from rancher Charles B. Irwin in April 1911 for \$2,975. In January of that year, he purchased two stallions from John M. Kuykendall, a well-known horse fancier, for \$1,000.

The same check register reveals the breakdown of his marriage to Louise. She traveled east in February 1909, and by August of that year, he sent a draft to the New Brown Hotel in Denver to apply to "Mrs. Van Tassell's account." He remitted \$1,214.80 to the Denver Dry Goods Company to cover her account and by December 1911, he was forwarding a monthly allowance of \$400 to her in Denver. Earlier that year, he sent the Stock Growers Bank \$1,082 to cover her overdrafts. Meanwhile, Old Van was taking care of business in Cheyenne and eating at the Kabis Cafe or at Harry P. Hynds' Grill.

The couple, whose marriage was a stellar social event in 1886, was now rent asunder. On January 17, 1912, Louise W. Swan Van Tassell, plaintiff, was granted a divorce from R. S. Van Tassell. She charged that he neglected her and that he never came home. He did not argue. Two of the most prominent names in Cheyenne legal circles represented them. Mrs. Van Tassell hired T. Blake Kennedy, and Van Tassell retained John Lacey. Both lawyers later became judges. The file consists of three documents: the petition, a short answer, and the decree. Only the signature of a judge was needed to end the union. After the action, Louise Swan Van Tassell disappeared from the scene.²⁴

Van Tassell retained his sharp eye for fine horses, a good business opportunity and comely women. On July 17, 1913, he took his third wife. The bride was Maude Bradley, the 36-year-old daughter of Robert W. Bradley. She had been reared in Castle Dare after Bradley had reclaimed it from D. D. Dare.

"Mr. Van" was more than 30 years her senior. Unlike his flamboyant Victorian-style wedding to Louise Swan, this simple ceremony in the home of the bride's sister, Florence LaFontaine, was marked by two short paragraphs in the local newspaper. It ended with, "Both Mr. And [Sic] Mrs. Van Tassell are too well known in Cheyenne to need introduction and both are blessed with numerous friends who will rejoice at the happy termination of their romance."²⁵

They enjoyed a luxurious life, living in the Morrie Avenue mansion, entertaining at their ranch home and

wintering in California. Van Tassell continued to ride a "Gypsy" many miles daily until 1919, when a swinging ranch gate struck his hip and slowed him down. He had difficulty walking and riding. He continued, however, to direct his immense ranch interests until his death on April 12, 1931, in Pasadena, California.²⁶ He is buried in a large stone mausoleum in Lakeview Cemetery, Cheyenne, along with members of the Bradley family. His name is embossed in nine-inch-high letters on the lintel.

Maude Bradley Van Tassell outlived him by 17 years. She continued life in the same mode, presided over her large home, managed the ranches and spent winters in California. One accounting states that she inherited 40,000 acres in four ranches. The original at Van Tassell, Wyoming, east of Lusk on the Nebraska-Wyoming border, according to one source, was "1/2 days drive from Mrs. Van Tassell's home in Cheyenne."²⁷ The next largest was 27 miles north of Cheyenne at Islay, Wyoming. There were two smaller ranches west of Cheyenne. Upon her death on July 25, 1949, the estate was sold and the proceeds given to the public.

What did our Mohawk Dutchman leave as a memorial to a life filled with trail blazing adventure and business success? He had no children, the ranch property was sold, the livestock dispersed and the mansions torn down. Once a shipping point on the Fremont, Elkhart and Missouri Valley Railroad line, the hamlet of Van Tassell, Wyoming, is now bypassed by the Burlington Railroad. Only a few scattered buildings, a sign telling that the first American Legion Post in the country was established there, and a post office situated in a home, mark the spot. The population is eight.

Renesselaer Schuyler Van Tassell is a forgotten man.

²⁴ Document 10 #88, on microfilm in the office of the Clerk of the Court, Laramie County, Wyoming.

²⁵ *The Wyoming Tribune*, July 18, 1913.

²⁶ Van Tassell's obituary, *Douglas Enterprise*, April 14, 1931.

²⁷ "Wyoming Cowbells," *Annals of Wyoming* 20-21 (1948-49), 231.

After retiring as director of the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum in 1991, Shirley Flynn devoted three years to researching and writing Let's Go! Let's Show! Let's Rodeo: The History of Cheyenne Frontier Days. The book was published in 1996 to mark the 100th running of that event. A resident of Cheyenne, she currently is collecting stories of "forgotten pioneers," both male and female.

Crook County's Hyena

By Ellen Crago Mueller

"A laughing hyena is roaming the hills somewhere in Crook County, having escaped from the Barney Brothers circus early Monday morning." So reported the *Sundance Times* on the front page, June 4, 1936.

"A trailer carrying animal cages was overturned and several animals made their escape," the paper reported. "All were captured except the hyena, and while circus employees spent several hours in trying to capture the beast, he made good his escape."

The hyena escaped on what became Interstate 90, one mile east of Beulah on the Wyoming-South Dakota state line. It wandered north along the state line and, for several days, people heard the strange barks and howls. It was a scary sound.

"Circus employees state it is doubtful if the animal would live long in this climate, but that remains to be seen," the *Times* article added. "They hyena is a dog-like animal with longer fore legs than hind legs, and a mane."

My parents, John and Edith (Thomas) Crago, had purchased the Sidney Thomas homestead (my grandparents' place), one mile north of Beulah. In the summer of 1935, the federal government purchased most of the livestock in the area because of the drought and the poor market for beef cattle. We had plenty of hay so Dad culled his herd and kept the best to feed throughout the winter.

One night in 1936, our cattle began to die, one by one. Within hours, two-thirds of the herd was dead. No one knew what caused the deaths so the meat could not be eaten nor the milk from the milk cows used. All that could be salvaged were the hides. The carcasses were hauled to a gully in the back pasture and buried.

Soon, coyotes found the gully with the meat. They immediately called in all their family and friends and began devouring the meat. At that point, they were the best fed and noisiest coyotes in Wyoming.

The escaped hyena, roaming nearby, heard the coyotes and went to our pasture to investigate. Soon, he had run off the coyotes and was enjoying a solo feast. In a few days, he either tired of the beef diet or the coyotes reasserted their "ownership." The hyena went over the hill to the sheep camp of neighbor Henry Tauck to sample some mutton.

There weren't many radios in that area in 1936. The reception was not very clear either. The only local news was from the weekly newspaper that came out on Friday.

When the hyena appeared at the sheep camp during the night, the shepherd heard the commotion and thought the coyotes were attacking his flock. He grabbed his rifle, spotted the hyena and shot it. The next morning, when he went out to remove the carcass, he was horrified. He hadn't heard about the escaped hyena and had no idea what it was that he had killed. Eventually, he did contact a sheriff's deputy in Beulah who identified the animal as the escaped hyena.

"Evidently lambs looked pretty good to the beast," the *Sundance Times* reported the next week. "but the shepherd objected, so the laughing hyena is not laughing anymore."

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HYENA ROAMING HILLS IN THE COUNTY; ESCAPED FROM CIRCUS HERE ON MONDAY

"A laughing hyena" is roaming the hills somewhere in Crook county, having escaped from the Barney Brothers circus early Monday morning.

A trailer carrying animal cages was overturned and several animals made their escape. All were captured but the hyena, and while circus employees spent several hours in trying to capture the beast, he made good his escape.

Circus employees stated that it was doubtful if the animal would live long in this climate, but that remains to be seen. The hyena is a dog-like animal with longer fore legs than hind legs, and with a mane.

The author, a former Wyoming State Historical Society president and long-time Soci-ety member, is a frequent contributor to An-nals. She lives in Cheyenne.

PRESERVING THE PAST: THE CASE OF GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

**AN OPINION PIECE BY
ROBERT W. RIGHTER**

The mountains of Grand Teton National Park draw millions of visitors every year. Jackson Hole's landscape represents one of the most sublime in the world. Yet, often overlooked in the natural beauty of the region is a rich human history. While the mountains remain unscathed, over the past seventy years the historically significant buildings have been quietly disappearing. This article attempts to explain the loss of this historic heritage. It also calls for a change of heart in park policies as well as a renewed commitment to preserve the best of what remains.

Although today there is reason for optimism, in the past park leadership has often taken the position that cultural resources are not important. They have burned, removed, or ignored historic building with little regard for the past.

Why was this so? How could the leadership of an agency entrusted with preserving our cultural heritage be so disrespectful of that very heritage? There are a number of explanations, including budgetary ones. Historic preservation costs money. And, of course, some years ago administrators designated Grand Teton park as a natural area, thereby relegating cultural resources to a very low priority.¹ In addition, a number of superintendents have been disinterested in cultural resources and one was openly hostile.² Also, some park naturalists have argued that wildlife habitat will suffer if cultural resources receive attention.³ Although all these justifications have some validity -- and I will return to two of them -- I believe that the unique history of the park partially explains, paradoxically, the antipathy toward history.

Politicians and philanthropists created Grand Teton National Park in a crucible of controversy seldom

equaled in environmental history annals. Whereas Congress created Yellowstone within two years, the mountainous park to the south required some fifty-two years from idea to reality. This struggle cannot be fully retold here. It is enough to say that cattlemen, rugged individualists, Easterners, "New Dealers," "state's righters," state of Wyoming officials, Forest Service personnel, and Park Service leaders all wanted control over Jackson Hole and the Tetons. They cajoled, fought, and sued each other before the Park Service emerged triumphant.⁴

How did this tempestuous history undermine historic preservation? Much of the flat, broad reaches of Jackson Hole had been homesteaded. The areas around Mormon Row, Jenny Lake, Moose, and Moran all

¹ The Grand Teton National Park *Master Plan*, 1976, p. 3, states that "Grand Teton, by the provisions of its establishment act, is a natural area."

² Since some of these superintendents are alive and some are still active in the NPS, it seems reasonable to avoid naming specific superintendents.

³ Other reasons that have surfaced included problems with preserving structures on a flood plain. A common reason for inaction is the lack of a consensus, even though the structure or site has been studied and documented.

⁴ For a full account see Robert W. Righter, *Crucible For Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982). See also David J. Saylor, *Jackson Hole, Wyoming* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970); Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961). For a more local account see Robert B. Betts, *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole, Wyoming* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1978), and Nathaniel Burt, *Jackson Hole Journal* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981).

featured numerous buildings, grazing cattle, and some irrigated fields. To create the park as we know it today, these settlers and dude ranchers would have to be bought out. The man to do it was John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who in 1927 committed himself to purchasing private land north of Jackson and on both the west and east side of the Snake River. By 1933 he had purchased over 30,000 acres. The *modus operandi* of Rockefeller's Snake River Land Company was to either burn or remove settler structures with the thought that they distracted from the natural, pristine beauty of the valley. No one knows just how many structures the company and the Park Service destroyed between 1927 and 1980, but the most knowledgeable estimate is seventy-five percent.⁵

Sensible reasons existed for torching many of these buildings. Some were poorly constructed, example of what locals called cowboy carpentry. Some buildings featured advertising, multiple power and telephone lines, and unsightly building materials. Others were falling down, even without the assistance of the Snake River Land Company. These buildings detracted from the mountain landscape.⁶ Thus the company busied itself with not only buying land, but sanitizing these purchases through removal of human presence. Since the homesteading era was so recent (about 1890 to 1930) it seldom, if ever, occurred to company officials that they were destroying buildings of potential historical or cultural value. The only buildings to

escape this purge were those which had immediate utility -- either to serve the traveling public, the needs of the company, or the National Park Service.

In other words, from the mid-1920s leadership has been committed to destroying evidence of settler habitation, thus returning the park landscape to a pre-1880 condition. The Snake River Land Company commenced this program, but when the National Park Service acquired title to the land in 1949 it continued the program of clearing buildings and structures. This practice continues to this day. It is a historical pattern ingrained for seventy years. There have been exceptions, such as the Cunningham Homestead and the Maud Noble cabin, and past administrators should be given credit.

However, in general the NPS has tended to view early ranching structures as graffiti on the landscape:

⁵ Former Grand Teton National Park historian John Daugherty gave 75% as a reasonable estimate. In conversing with Mike Johnson, the current Cultural Resources specialist, he believes this is a reasonable estimate.

⁶ In a long letter from Horace Albright to Wilford Neilson, April 5, 1933, published as *Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s Proposed Gift of Land for the National Park System in Wyoming*, Albright made it clear that both Rockefeller and his wife were appalled at the tawdry dance hall and "unsightly structures" in the Jenny Lake area. Certainly Rockefeller's decision to act was largely based on his realization that Jackson Hole was doomed to the ubiquitous uglification associated with unplanned tourist development unless he did something.



Leek's Lodge. Photograph was taken shortly before the building was demolished.

Leslie Emerson Smith

*Bar BC Ranch in the 1920s.
J. E. Stimson photograph,
Wyoming State Archives,
Dept. of State Parks and Cul-
tural Resources*



edifices which represent desecration of nature. Nevertheless, attitudes change and time passes. It is good to remind ourselves that the National Register of Historic Places guidelines state that a structure only fifty years old may be eligible. Thus, what was one generation's graffiti may be a later generation's historical artifact. One hundred and fifty years ago migrating Americans scribbled their names on the surface of Independence Rock. Nowadays we revere such graffiti, protecting and interpreting it.

For a number of years Grand Teton National Park administrators had little interest in preserving, let alone protecting. It is time for a change, for there is little left, and no viable reason to continue the cultural carnage. The argument that Grand Teton is a "natural area" is no longer viable. That is an arbitrary categorization which can occasionally give direction, but surely should not rescind the charge under the 1916 NPS Organic Act and the Historic Sites Act of 1935 to protect, preserve and interpret our cultural heritage.

Of course in today's world it is more difficult for administrators to simply burn down a building. They must contend with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which requires study and evaluation. Unfortunately, continued site study often sounds a death toll for the cultural resource in question. For instance, in Grand Teton Park, Leek's Lodge, enrolled on the National Register, represents a victim of indecision. From 1970 and perhaps earlier, the NPS vacillated on what to do with this historic lodge on the shores of Jackson Lake. In the meantime Leek's Lodge deteriorated. By 1986, when I first took an interest in it, it was beyond repair or recycling. In 1995 park

administrators asked for bids to remove the building. Neglect, administrative apathy and indecision resulted in the effective destruction of the building. Continued study -- without stabilization and interpretation -- can simply guarantee the loss of the very resource which is being studied. Leek's Lodge has now been burned and all remnants of its existence removed.

Another example which illustrates the need for action rather than talk is Struthers and Katherine Burt's Bar BC dude ranch, established in 1912. It quickly became the best known dude ranch in the valley. The Burts were both educated Easterners, yet committed to Jackson Hole. While Struthers ran the ranch, Katherine wrote novels. Besides attracting important literary figures from both the East and West Coasts, Struthers took a leading role in the fight to establish Grand Teton National Park. In fact, an argument can be made that without his efforts, the park as we know it today, would not exist.

The Bar BC has both a physical and a literary history, and is without question the most historic dude ranch in the national park.⁷ However, it also became a thorn in the side of park administrators. Briefly, Struthers Burt sold out in 1929 to his partner, Irving Corse. In turn, Corse sold to Rockefeller's Snake River Land Company, with the provision that he and his immediate heirs could continue to run the place. Corse committed suicide, but in the meantime he had married a woman

⁷ Two books focus on the Bar BC. Struthers Burt wrote *The Diary of a Dude-Wrangler* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924) and his son, Nathaniel, who was born on a kitchen table at the Bar BC in 1913, wrote *Jackson Hole Journal* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1983), largely the story of his boyhood in Jackson Hole and the Bar BC.

thirty years his junior. Margaretta Corse carried on until the 1980s.

By the 1950s, however, the Bar BC had lost its sheen and glamour. The buildings were in disrepair and Margaretta rented them out cheap in the 1960s and 1970s. She also came to despise the National Park Service, and I think the feeling was mutual. I remember in 1980 arriving at the bench above the Bar BC with Grand Teton National Park historian John Daugherty. John announced he would go no further, fearing that Margaretta might shoot her rifle at him. He had no idea whether she would aim to hit.

Perhaps the shaky relationship between Margaretta and the NPS made administrators blind to the historic importance of the old dude ranch. In 1983, when I was a member of the Wyoming Consulting Committee for the National Register, the committee visited the Bar BC. Superintendent Jack Stark accompanied us, and as we walked through the old ranch he leaned over to me and said, "Bob, I want to bring in a bull dozer and level this place." One thing about Stark, he always spoke his mind, and you knew exactly what he thought about cultural resources!

In 1986 Stark did his best to carry out this wish. By that year Mrs. Corse resided in a Philadelphia nursing home. She authorized the Frome Auction Service of Afton, Wyoming, to dispose of the remaining Bar BC property. What was remarkable was that not only the furniture and various memorabilia would go, but also the guest cabins, the main house, the dining hall, and the recreation hall.⁸ Didn't those buildings belong to the National Park Service as a result of Rockefeller's (Jackson Hole Preserve) gift in 1949? A check with the Teton County Assessor's office revealed that county property taxes had not been collected on the buildings since 1948 -- a clear sign that the buildings belonged to the federal government.

When confronted with this evidence, park administrators retreated. Faced with local newspaper publicity and concern by the both the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, Assistant Superintendent Bill Schenk admitted that "ownership was still unclear...and they [the cabins] would not be offered for sale Saturday."⁹

Of course there was nothing unclear about ownership. The administrators at GTNP were attempting to rid the park of the building without going through the normal steps (Section 106 of the 1966 Historic Preservation Act) of evaluation for historic structures. Local vigilance, the media, and the help of national organizations exposed their plans, thus thwarting a legally questionable action.

Although local vigilance saved the Bar BC buildings from removal and probable destruction, the status of the old dude ranch remains in question. A new superintendent has been ambivalent at best, and when ambivalence is the feeling, studying is the policy. Remarkably, the National Park Service issued a contract to the Roy Eugene Graham and Associates for a Historic Structures Report on the Bar BC. The cost: Approximately \$225,000 dollars! The report suggested that the 160 acre property should be enclosed by a cyclone fence. Furthermore, the dilapidated cabins should be restored at a price tag exceeding one million dollars. Preposterous in cost and impractical in its recommendations, the report was far from helpful since the recommendations were out-of-character with NPS standards. It merely gave the GT administrators another excuse for doing nothing. If the Park Service had spent the \$225,000 in stabilizing the buildings and interpreting the site, it would have been money well spent.¹⁰

Although volunteers have cleaned the site and replaced the roofs on some of the Bar BC cabins, the NPS remains ambivalent. However, at this writing it appears that the majority of the buildings will be stabilized and interpreted for the public.¹¹

These hopeful signs at the Bar BC suggest that the Park Service is beginning to respond to preservationist concerns. Nowhere is this new spirit of cooperation more evident than on Mormon Row, the farming community established in 1896. Over the years many of the buildings have been removed, and with the exception of the Clark Moulton family's one acre, the settlement has been in moldering decay. However, in the summer of 1995 the Moulton family restored the much-photographed barn, and the following year a volunteer group from Lansing, Michigan, stabilized the Andy Chambers homestead house. Last summer the work continued, as the Lansing group restored the Chambers pump house, and crews contracted by the National Park Service shingled six Mormon Row barns and homes. Plans are now underway to make this historic district available to the public as an historic walking tour. Given the setting and the resource, it will likely become a popular locale for those tourists seeking a different experience.

⁸ *Jackson Hole News*, July 30, 1986, 1.

⁹ *Casper Star-Tribune*, August 16, 1986, B1.

¹⁰ I do not know the exact cost of the Bar BC contract, but NPS officials have not objected to a figure between \$225,000 and \$240,000.

¹¹ Telephone conversation with Mike Johnson, Cultural Resource Specialist, GTNP, March 5, 1999.

Another significant site which seemed destined for gradual ruin, if not the wrecking ball, was the magnificent Geraldine Lucas homestead, nestled at the base of the Tetons. For years its future was uncertain, but now it appears it will be a candidate for modified restoration. Volunteers from the Teton County Historic Preservation Board cleaned up the place in 1996. Other volunteers have shored up the roof on the original homestead house. The National Park Service is considering issuing a permit for use as the center of an artist-in-residence program.

These activities at the Bar BC, Mormon Row and the Lucas Homestead have energized those interested in historic preservation. There has yet to be a strong commitment to historic preservation by Grand Teton administrators, but the work has begun and volunteers are cleaning sites and pounding nails. Perhaps that is all we can hope for, and yet workers should not labor without assurances that their efforts are not in vain.

Other regional superintendents could provide a model. At Glacier National Park Superintendent Randy Jones is turning preservation around. Over a year ago he remarked that historic preservation "is long overdue. The natural parks have been long overlooked for their cultural and historic values, and certainly this park has..."¹² Amen. He is changing things. From what I hear, he has embraced cultural resources. We need that sort of commitment in Jackson Hole.

A recent article in *National Parks Magazine* by Yvette La Pierre states that "the Park Service is beginning to recognize that landscapes shaped by humans -- cultural landscapes -- are as much a part of our country's rich heritage as natural ones."¹³ I hope the word reaches Northwest Wyoming.

What has become evident to some superintendents is that when you eliminate human beings from the natural landscape, you are creating an artificial one. We are a part of nature, for better or worse, and to eliminate the human species (where it once existed) from the story of the park is to create an artificial story; a story which does not relate to reality.

Of course, as we know, money is usually the bottom line, and it is a requirement for historic preservation. It is an age old justification for inaction. However, this excuse may be going by the wayside. In a 1997 commentary in *National Geographic Traveler* magazine, editor Richard Busch remarked that with the new entrance fee schedule, Grand Teton National Park could expect increased revenue of approximately \$4 million over the next three years. What to do with the money? Busch states that the "dollars will be put to work improving roads and trails, renovating the

visitors center, and restoring historic buildings..."¹⁴ Supposedly there will be four million dollars for three issues. It might be sheer folly to expect such generous funding for historic resources, yet the need and the importance can no longer be swept under the rug, nor can Teton Park administrators put forth the traditional budget excuses with a straight face. Money is available, and it is high time that cultural resources claim their due.

So people who care about cultural resources in Grand Teton National Park have hope. Teton County now has a Historic Preservation Board (CLG) which reviews and comments on park proposals. It also addresses preservation issues outside park boundaries. It has contracted to survey all historic sites and buildings in the county, and this survey is in the second year of a three year time frame. Board members conduct windshield surveys of properties, write National Register nominations, educate children, and often get their feet wet and their hands dirty.

Interest in history extends to the county as well as the park.

But to return to the park. It has local support. Money is available, and opportunities for public/private partnerships on projects abound. It is time for action. The public has a right to expect the utmost dedication from the agency which is responsible for the cultural resources of not only Grand Teton National Park, but of the nation.

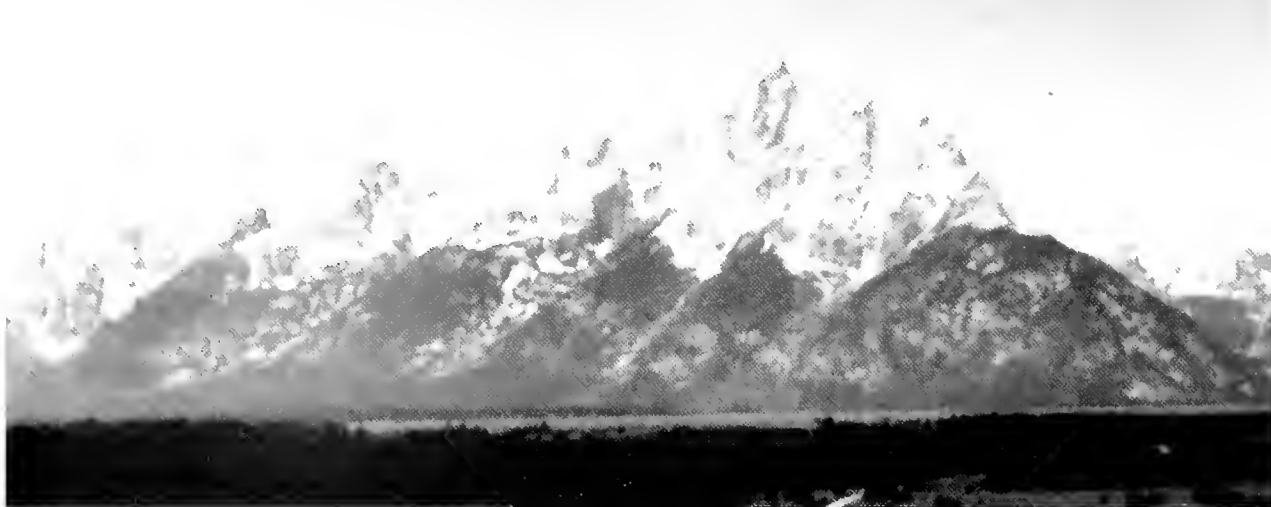
¹² Kevin McCullen, "Delving Into a Park's Past," *Rocky Mountain News*, September 14, 1997, 14A.

¹³ Yvette La Pierre, "The Taming of the View," *National Parks* (September/October, 1997), 30.

¹⁴ Richard Busch, "Editor's Note," *National Geographic Traveler* 14 (July/August, 1997), 10.

*The author is a seasonal resident of Jackson Hole and a recently retired professor of history at the University of Texas at El Paso. He was formerly on the history faculty, University of Wyoming. In August he will join his wife, Sherry L. Smith, at Southern Methodist University as a research professor of history. He is author of *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park* (Colorado Associated University Press, 1982), and more recently, *Wind Power in America: A History* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). He continues his commitment to historic preservation in Jackson Hole.*

To Preserve the View



View from Hedrick's Point, 1990. Photo by Leslie Emerson Smith

A "Tour" in Text and Pictures of Historic Sites Relating to the Establishment of Grand Teton National Park

By Tamsen Emerson Hert

Picture a dance hall on the east side of Jenny Lake or 400 summer homes dotting the shores of Jackson Lake. Imagine scores of fast food restaurants, motels and curio shops lining Highway 191. This sight could have been seen were it not for the strong commitment to conservation that a number of Jackson Hole residents demonstrated between 1920 and 1950. Concern for the preservation of the Tetons as well as the view from east of the Snake River pitted neighbors against each other. Nathaniel Burt, son of Struthers Burt, gave tribute to those concerned individuals: "To those like my father and his friends who loved the country as they had first known it, but who recognized that the tourist was coming, some sort of special preservation scheme was imperative. Letting human nature take its course meant ruin."¹

At times even those on the same side disagreed over practices and plans for the Park. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., entered the scene early on and without his involvement, the Park certainly would have been smaller.²

This tour will guide you to some of the scenes, and discuss some of the individuals, that were most significant in the park debate. A few of the sites simply provide a little history about the Jackson Hole region.

Begin at Park Headquarters in Moose. Directions to the next site follow each summary. Some of the roads you will be traveling on are dirt and by looking at the map you can find alternative routes if you wish to remain on paved roads.

Directions: Leave the parking lot at the Visitor Center. Turn towards the Park Entrance Gates. Your entry fee is good for seven days at both Grand Teton-Yellowstone National Parks. Go north on the Teton Park Road. Turn right at the road to the Chapel of the Transfiguration and Menor's Ferry.

MAUD NOBLE CABIN

This is where it all began. On July 26, 1923, Horace Albright, Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, received an invitation to meet with local residents and conservationists Struthers Burt, Horace Carncross, Jack Eynon, Joe Jones, Dick Winger and Maud Noble. These individuals discussed their concerns about the future

¹ Nathaniel Burt, *Jackson Hole Journal*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 132.

² The story of the struggle is quite involved. Robert Righter has provided the full story in his book, *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982).

of the valley. Commercialization threatened the destruction of wildlife as well as the scenic beauty. Struthers Burt, a writer and dude rancher, stated the plan: "It would be a museum on the hoof — native wild life, cattle, wranglers, all living again for a brief time each summer the life of the early West with its glamour, romance and charm."³ The majority felt that this proposal was sound. A "recreational area" reflected their preference for protection but not the limitations of preservation as then existed in Yellowstone. They wanted to provide for traditional activities such as hunting, grazing and dude ranching.

The plan of action required one or more wealthy individuals to quietly purchase land north of Jackson's Hole. The individual(s) would then hold the land until Congress would reimburse the landowner and turn the land over to the National Park Service. Those concerned people attending this historic meeting had no idea that they would need only one individual to accomplish their dream.

The plan first discussed at this site has been accomplished by the creation of Grand Teton National Park. A plaque on the doorway reads: "The broad vision and patriotic foresight of those who met here that July evening in 1923 will be increasingly appreciated by our country with the passing years."⁴

Directions: Tour the Menor's Ferry area and visit the Chapel of the Transfiguration. Travel east to Moose Junction. Turn north on Highway 191. Drive a short distance to Antelope Flats Road, turn right. At the first dirt road (Kelly), turn south. This area is known as Mormon Row.

MORMON ROW

Mormon Row was settled around the turn of the century by several Mormon families moving into the area from Idaho. May, Moulton, and Chambers are just a few of those early settlers — many of their descendants reside in Jackson today. A school, church and other buildings are all that remain.

John Moulton and his wife Bartha, homesteaded here in 1908. While proving up on the land, John worked on other ranches and trapped beaver and coyotes. The Moulton homestead was sold to the National Park Service in 1953 with a lease on the land until John Moulton's death. The Moulton Barn, on the west side with

the Tetons as a backdrop, is one of the most photographed sites in Wyoming.

Other residents of Antelope Flats took the opportunity to sell their lands to John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Snake River Land Company. Many people, including Gov. Frank Emerson were unhappy about these sales. They believed good, arable lands should not be part of the land purchase. However, settlers in Mormon Row wanted to sell. The Snake River Land Company purchased the land for \$50 an acre. Homesteads that had not been improved in the required amount of time were terminated by the General Land Office.⁵

Today the Park Service does not have plans for this area. There is potential here, as with other areas throughout the Park, for a "living history" program.

Directions: Return to the Antelope Flats road and turn east. Log structures stood on the north side of the road. This was the Pfeifer homestead. The original buildings here were left to decay and burned in a wildfire in 1994. Joe Pfeifer came to Jackson's Hole from Montana in 1910 and lived here, without any modern conveniences, until his death in 1964. Continue on the Antelope Flats Road. Before reaching the Schwiering Studio, take the old Yellowstone Wagon Road and travel north.

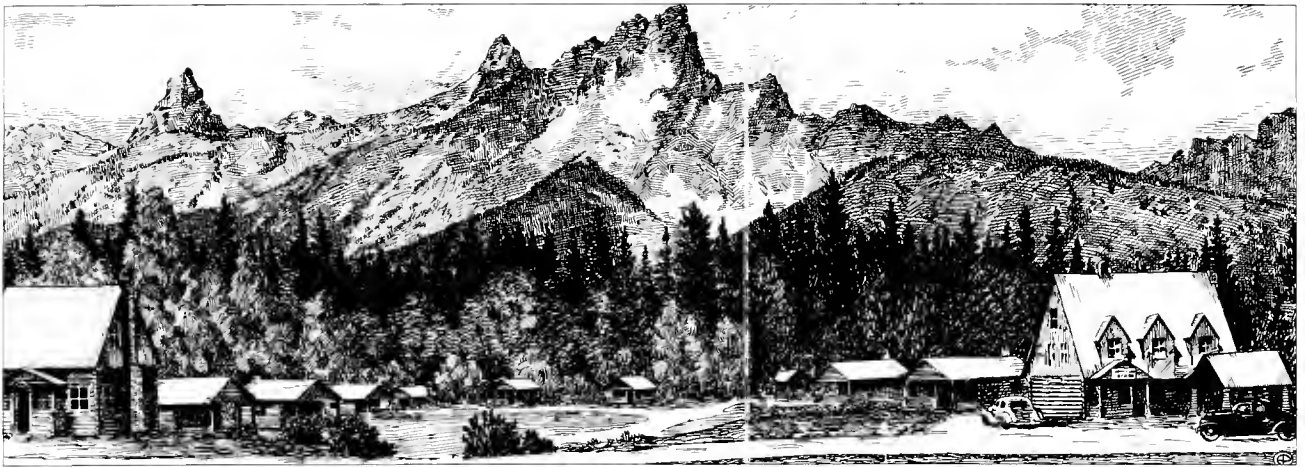
³ Orin H. and Lorraine G. Bonney, *Bonney's Guide Grand Teton National Park and Jackson's Hole* (Houston: Orin H. and Lorraine G. Bonney, 1961, 1970), 86.

⁴ Robert Righter, *A Teton Country Anthology* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart Inc., 1990), 173.

⁵ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 64.



Site of Pfeifer Homestead, 1998. Photo by Jerry Krois



Postcard, Kimmel Kabins and Jenny Lake Store, Jackson Hole, c. 1940.

Author's collection

HEDRICK'S POINT

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and his family visited Horace Albright in Yellowstone in July 1926. Albright took the family on a tour of the Jackson Hole area. The spectacular scenery of the Tetons made an impression on Rockefeller and his wife. Both were disturbed by the commercial developments encroaching on the Leigh-String-Jenny Lake region.

On the return trip to Yellowstone Albright stopped near this point on the bluff overlooking the Snake River. (See photograph, page 14). Albright described it:

It was particularly lovely that afternoon. The shadows of the Tetons were already reaching across the river bottoms, but Antelope Flats, the lands around Blacktail Butte and the distant hills cutting off Jackson from the Gros Ventre were still bathed in sunshine from a clear sky. As we stood on this little "rise" and absorbed the beauty of the scene spread before us, I told Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller of the meeting at Miss Noble's cabin three years earlier and the plan to protect and preserve for the future this sublime valley.⁶

Rockefeller's commitment to preservation of the valley may have come from stopping at Hedrick's Point. That winter, Rockefeller requested Albright's report and map discussing the proposal outlined at this point overlooking the Snake. Rockefeller made his decision — acquire lands throughout the valley to protect the scenery and preserve the wildlife.

The Snake River Land Company was incorporated on August 25, 1927, and purchase of the lands began.

Directions: Continue north on the wagon road until you return to Highway 191. Turn right (north) and then turn left at the Cunningham Cabin Historic Site.

CUNNINGHAM CABIN

J. Pierce Cunningham lived in Jackson Hole for 40 years. This homestead, established in 1890, formed the nucleus of his Bar Flying U Ranch. Cunningham served as postmaster, game warden and justice of the peace. When Teton County was organized in 1923, he was chosen as one of the commissioners. *From the parking area there is a short trail to the buildings. A guide to the area is available.*⁷

Reports of a horse stealing operation based in Red Lodge, Montana, appeared in many newspapers during 1892. In April 1893, two suspected horse thieves, George Spenser and Mike Burnett, who had wintered at Cunningham's Spread Creek Ranch, were shot by posse members. Later investigation revealed that the leaders of the posse were not U. S. marshals.⁸

Directions: Continue north on 191 to Moran Junction. Turn west and continue to the Oxbow Bend Turnout.

OXBOW BEND

Laurance Rockefeller inherited his father's love of nature and interest in conservation. He took over the Jackson Hole Project in 1945 and developed tourist attractions that would appeal to those visitors in the valley for only a short visit. One of these attractions

⁶ Letter, Horace M. Albright to Mr. Wilford Neilson, "History of the Snake River Land Company and of the Efforts to Preserve the Jackson Hole Country for the Nation," (Jackson: Snake River Land Company, 1933?), 24.

⁷ *Cunningham Cabin Self-Guided Trail*. (Moose: Grand Teton Natural History Association, 1985).

⁸ Elizabeth Wied Hayden, "Shoot Out at Cunningham's Cabin," *Teton* 8:29-31.

was the Jackson Hole Wildlife Park located at the Oxbow Bend.

The Wildlife Park was to be a fenced area containing buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, black bear, beaver and other native species. The plan suggested that such an attraction would serve as "a gathering point for naturalists and wild-life enthusiasts, and an area for scientific study in wild-life conservation, propagation, and management on a scale unparalleled in the nation."⁹ Such a park would ensure visitors a view of western wildlife.

This "zoo" (as it was referred to by some) incited another battle between already warring factions. Conservation groups were especially upset at this plan. Olaus Murie, wildlife biologist and supporter of the park plan, was vehemently opposed to such a "park." In an article in *National Parks Magazine* in 1946, Murie wrote:

I gave whole-hearted support to the creation of the Jackson Hole National Monument, with the thought that the area would give protection to the intangible values that are so important in this valley. I want to make it clear that I did not advocate a road-side zoo in the midst of the grandeur of Jackson Hole. On the contrary, it is this kind of intrusion which must be kept out of the valley.¹⁰

Supporters of the wildlife park argued that it would serve as an educational instrument. In the end, Laurance backed off and the fences came down.

This location was also the original site of the University of Wyoming/National Park Service Research Center. The buildings were relocated to the AMK Ranch when it became the research center.

Directions: Continue on Highway 89 past the Jackson Lake Junction. Stop at the Willow Flats Turnout. Across the road is the former Jackson Lake Ranger Station.

JACKSON LAKE RANGER STATION

This was the site of the most physical battle in the struggle to create Grand Teton National Park. President Franklin Roosevelt established Jackson Hole National Monument March 15, 1943 — withdrawing a portion of acreage from the Teton National Forest. This did not bode well with the U. S. Forest Service. As Robert Righter described it, "From the beginning the Forest Service had openly or covertly opposed National Park Service objectives in Jackson Hole. Now it was difficult to admit defeat and graciously turn over some 130,000 acres of land and lakes."¹¹

Regional Director of the National Park Service, Laurence C. Merriam, arrived in Jackson Hole to oversee the changing of the guard. A description of what he found is reported by Righter.

When the Forest Service evacuated in June, 1943 it was not done with what one might call a spirit of camaraderie. Not only were the furniture and equipment taken from the Jackson Lake Ranger Station, but all the plumbing in the basement, kitchen, and bathroom was removed. Even doors, cupboards, drawers, and cabinets, plus the accompanying hardware, were considered "movable equipment." Well tubing was removed, and an underground tank unearthed and packed away. To complete the task a four-foot square hole was cut in the living room, severing not only the flooring but the floor joists as well. In short, the station was uninhabitable.¹²

The Forest Service agreed to make the necessary repairs and provide replacements of fixtures to make the structure livable. Today this infamous structure is a residence for park employees.

Directions: Continue north on 89 to Jackson Lake Lodge.

JACKSON LAKE LODGE & LUNCH TREE HILL

Lunch Tree Hill is the spot from which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. first viewed the Teton Range in 1926. A plaque on top of the hill reads:

This tablet is placed here in tribute to Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., whose vision, generosity, and love of country have made possible the preservation of this region in its pristine beauty and grandeur. Here the spell of the magnificent Teton Mountains and the beautiful valley they guard first captivated him. He has since come often to this hilltop for renewed inspiration.

The original resort was the Amoretti Inn, built in 1922. Located only 1/2 mile from Moran, it was one of the largest of early tourist resorts. Its name was changed to Jackson Lake Lodge a short time after it was built.

Purchase of Jackson Lake Lodge by Rockefeller interests was not part of the original plan. However, the owners wanted to sell. They received \$40,000 in Teton Investment Company stock and \$35,000 in cash

⁹ Olaus J. Murie, "Fenced Wildlife for Jackson Hole," *National Parks Magazine*, 20, Jan.-March 1946, 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 121.

¹² *Ibid.*

for the lodge. Tourist facilities were not encouraged in the original plan for park expansion, but following the establishment of the larger park, it became necessary to provide overnight facilities.

It took nearly three years to build the present Jackson Lake Lodge. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. carefully selected the site — adjacent to Lunch Tree Hill. The main lounge picture window, 60 feet wide and 2 stories high, frames the Tetons. According to Bonney's *Guide*, Rockefeller had a scaffold erected to the exact level of the lounge floor — he wanted to be sure that "America saw the Tetons in the perspective he saw them." The Lodge was dedicated June 11, 1955, "both as a gift to the American people and a pilot project in park development."¹³

While the view is inspirational, the architecture has been debated. Some claim that the poured concrete structure, supposed to resemble wood-grain, does not blend with the environment.

Take time to enjoy the view from the lounge or the patio. Moose and beaver are frequent visitors to the willow flats. Don't miss the murals in the dining room!

Directions: Leave the lodge area and head north on 191 & 287. Travel past Colter Bay. Turn left at the exit for Leeks Marina.

LEEK'S LODGE

Stephen N. Leek (1858-1943) arrived in the Jackson Hole area in 1888 and became one of the first settlers to establish a permanent residence. His ranch is thirty

miles south of this lodge and was among the earliest dude ranches in the valley.

Leek is remembered for his involvement with the Jackson Hole elk herd. During the 1890's and 1900's he witnessed the winter starvation of the elk. He used a portion of his hay harvest to feed the elk and prevailed on neighbors to do the same. The Jackson elk herd became his crusade. Telling photographs and lectures in the East brought national attention to the plight of the elk. He aroused enough attention that in 1912 the Jackson Hole National Elk Refuge was established.

Leek also served as a guide and outfitter to hunters. It was not until 1926-27 that he built his hunting lodge. He was both architect and builder. The nomination of Leek's Lodge to the National Register of Historic Places reads:

Leek's name stands in a prominent place among the organizers and workers of the nation's earliest conservation efforts. This lodge should also be preserved as a memorial to a man who, given only a limited formal education, became, in the interest of wildlife preservation, a self-educated biologist, an author, a lecturer, [and] photographer and still remained a frontiersman.

Leek's Lodge remained in use as a recreational facility for visitors through 1974-75 and was removed in 1998. All that remains today is the stone fireplace.¹⁴

¹³ "Jackson Lake Lodge Dedication," June 11, 1955, foreword.

¹⁴ "Park Officials Want Leek's Lodge Removed," *Casper Star Tribune*, July 7, 1995, B3.



The stone fireplace, all that remains of Leek's Lodge, 1998.

Jerry Krois

Directions: North of Leek's Lodge is a paved road leading to the University of Wyoming/National Park Service Research Center.

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING - NATIONAL PARK SERVICE RESEARCH CENTER

The original ranch was established in 1890-91 by John Dudley Sargent (descendant of artist John Singer Sargent) and Robert Ray Hamilton (descendant of Alexander Hamilton). Marymere, Sargent's name for the ranch, was among the early attempts at dude ranching.

Many strange events occurred during Sargent's residence here. In 1891 Hamilton disappeared while hunting. After several days, searchers found his drowned body two miles below the Jackson Lake outlet. There is speculation that Sargent was involved in the death but this was never proven. Six years later, a very ill Mrs. Sargent was taken from the ranch so she could receive medical treatment. Adelaide Sargent died April 11, 1897. There are many conflicting stories about this episode. Some imply that Sargent beat her; others that she'd had some sort of accident and her husband was treating her illness the best he could. Sargent was scheduled to stand trial for the murder of his wife in April 1900 but the case was dismissed due to conflicting testimony and the lack of substantial evidence.

After the death of Adelaide, Sargent renamed Marymere the Pinetree Ranch. A few years later, he remarried. Most people considered his new wife crazy because she would set in a tree completely naked, play her violin and eat peanuts.¹⁵ John D. Sargent lived here until his suicide in 1913. The ten-room cabin was torn down several years later.

Pinetree Ranch was sold for \$600 to cover delinquent taxes. Lou Johnson, a sales executive for the Hoover Vacuum Cleaner Company, purchased Sargent's ranch in 1926. The Johnson home, built the following year, is a two-story building because Johnson's wife was afraid to sleep in a ground floor room with bears in the area. Several other buildings including a boathouse were constructed at this site. The Johnson's named their residence on Jackson Lake the Mae-Lou Lodge.

Following the death of Lou Johnson in 1931, Slim Lawrence became caretaker of the Mae-Lou property. Alfred Berol of the Eagle Pencil Company (became the Berol Corporation in 1969) purchased the ranch in 1936 for \$24,300. Construction began on the Berol Lodge in 1937. A new name was adopted — AMK Ranch — representing the first letters of the first name of each family member. The Berol home is a single-

story structure with windows looking out at Jackson Lake. Today, the master bedroom serves as a research library for the University of Wyoming.

Alfred Berol was notified in 1938 that the AMK could be condemned as part of the proposed extension of Grand Teton National Park. As executor of his father's estate, Kenneth Berol deeded the AMK to the United States in 1976 for \$3.3 million.¹⁶

The University of Wyoming - National Park Service Research Center relocated to the AMK property July 15, 1977. Research is conducted here on all aspects of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem. Recently, the focus has been on the aftermath of the 1988 forest fires.

Directions: Leave the Leeks Marina area and go south on 191 & 287 to the Jackson Lake Junction. A museum and visitor center is located at Colter Bay. At the Jackson Lake Junction, take the Teton Park Road to Jackson Lake Dam. There is a small parking area on the south side of the dam.

JACKSON LAKE DAM & MORAN TOWNSITE

When the original dam was proposed by the Bureau of Reclamation, not one word of protest was raised. The first dam on Jackson Lake was a crude rock-filled, log-crib structure erected in 1906. This dam washed out in 1910 and was replaced by a reinforced concrete dam in 1911. The second dam was barely finished when instructions were received to raise the lake level an additional ten feet — this was completed in 1916. During the 1980's additional work was done on the dam.

The argument against the dam arose when park expansionists wanted to include Jackson Lake. Some residents felt that the dam itself was a violation of wilderness. The National Parks Association argued that to include a reservoir was a violation of the sanctity of a national park. Bob Righter states "the damming of Jackson Lake was an act of environmental desecration second only to the inundation of Yosemite's Hetch Hetchy Valley."¹⁷

Arno Cammerer, Director of the NPS argued in favor of including the reservoir: "...the construction of a new reservoir which means violation of another great scenic

¹⁵ Esther Allen, "Strange Music at Merry mere," *Teton*, 9 (1976), 16.

¹⁶ "Through the Years at the AMK," *Teton*, 10 (1977), 2-5 & 61-64; Kenneth L. Diem, *A Tale of Dough Gods, Bear Grease, Cantaloupe and Sucker Oil: Marymere/Pinetree/Mae-Lou/AMK Ranch*. (Moran: University of Wyoming-National Park Service Research Center, 1986).

¹⁷ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 10.

area, is a very different thing from the attempt to save a previously violated area from further exploitation."¹⁸

In the end, park extension won the battle for inclusion of Jackson Lake in Grand Teton National Park.

The original town of Moran was located just east of the Jackson Lake dam. In 1928 the Snake River Land Company purchased the land and all buildings from Ben Sheffield for \$106,425. The town was dismantled in 1957—buildings were destroyed or relocated to other sites and the natural environment has reclaimed the area.

Directions: Continue south from the dam. To the right is Signal Mountain Lodge. Turn east at the Signal Mountain Scenic Drive exit. This is a five-mile drive to the summit of Signal Mountain.

SIGNAL MOUNTAIN DRIVE

The naming of Signal Mountain stems from the Sargent - Hamilton partnership. When Robert Hamilton was reported lost in 1891, searchers agreed to light a signal fire on the summit of this mountain (elev. 7,731 ft.) when his body was found.

Pioneer photographer William Henry Jackson accompanied the 1871 Hayden scientific expedition of to Yellowstone. Jackson's photographs contributed to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park. Hayden and Jackson returned to the area in 1872. William H. Jackson first recorded the majesty of the Tetons from the summit of this mountain in 1878.

In an address prepared for, but not read, at the dedication of the Teton National Park on July 29, 1929, Jackson discussed the numerous times he visited the area and the conditions in which he worked. He concluded:

I have returned here frequently in the meantime, for pleasure instead of profit, for there is — on our continent, no grander or more satisfying prospect than the one now before us in which beauty, as well as majesty, are combined.¹⁹

Directions: Return to the highway and continue driving south. Turn west at the North Jenny Lake Junction. This is a one-way road to the south. There are several turnouts for photo opportunities.

JENNY LAKE DRIVE

The boundaries of the Park established in 1929 included the Tetons and the eastern edge of Leigh, String and Jenny Lakes. Ideally, Grand Teton National Park was to be the first "wilderness" park. No hotels or facilities were to be included in park boundaries — not because Jackson residents were committed to wilderness but because they wanted to protect private and commercial interests. While there was little opposition

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁹ William H. Jackson, "Address Regarding First Photographing of the Tetons," *Annals of Wyoming*, 6 (July-October 1929), 189.



*Lucas-Fabian
Cabins, 1990.*

Leslie Emerson Smith

to preserving the mountains, the battles began when conservationists and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., expressed an interest in protecting the view.

Over the next 14 years Rockefeller's Snake River Land Company purchased some 35,000 acres in order to protect the area. In 1942, after numerous attempts at park expansion, Rockefeller threatened to sell the acreage if the Government did not want it. On March 16, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established Jackson Hole National Monument. Rockefeller deeded his 35,000+ acres as a gift to the federal government on December 6, 1949. After protracted disputes, Congress established the present Grand Teton National Park in September 1950 by combining the 1929 Park and 1943 Monument.

To acknowledge the Rockefeller's contribution to the preservation of Jackson Hole, Congress authorized the transfer of 24,000 acres of Forest Service land as the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway. Robert Righter states that the purpose of this land transfer was twofold: "To commemorate the many significant contributions to the cause of conservation in the United States by Rockefeller, and to provide both a symbolic and desirable physical connection between the world's first national park, Yellowstone, and the Grand Teton National Park."²⁰

Directions: Along this drive are Jenny and String Lakes; Jenny Lake Lodge; and the Jenny Lake Ranger Station and Store. Coming out at South Jenny Lake Junction, continue driving south. Just south of the Glacier Gulch turnout a dirt road goes west to the Lucas-Fabian Site.

LUCAS - FABIAN SITE

Mrs. Geraldine Lucas was the first Jackson area woman to climb the Grand Teton and she did that at the age of 59. A hardy individual, Mrs. Lucas bathed daily in Cottonwood Creek which flows just north of the Lucas cabin.

Opposed to park extension and Rockefeller's land purchases, Lucas promised that she would never leave her land. According to *Bonney's Guide*, she told Rockefeller "you stack up those silver dollars as high as the Grand Teton and I might talk to you." When she died in 1938, her ashes were buried on the property.²¹

It is ironic that her adversaries, Harold and Josephine Fabian, president and secretary of the Snake River Land Company, occupied the ranch after Mrs. Lucas' death. The Fabians were responsible for planning and completing the restoration of Menor's Ferry. Josephine

Fabian was instrumental in the Jackson Hole Oral History Project and has written about the area's history.

Directions: Return to the Teton Park Road and go south. The exit to the Bar B C Ranch is on the left (east). (If you reach the Cottonwood Creek turnout, you've gone too far).

BAR B C RANCH

Struthers Burt, a writer from Philadelphia, and Dr. Horace Carncross, a psychiatrist, established the Bar BC in 1910 after a lengthy search for the ideal site for a dude ranch. They both agreed on this site directly east of the Grand Teton and on a curve on the west bank of the Snake River. Zoë Hardy wrote: "It was a place that could support the practical needs of a ranch — water, grazing land, trees and bountiful hunting and fishing. It had two additional ingredients for a successful dude ranch: isolation and exceptional beauty."²²

The Bar BC was the second dude ranch in the valley. "Dudes" first arrived here in 1912. In the early years there were dances, costume balls, trapshooting, rodeos and horseback riding. Nathaniel Burt recalled:

The principal occupation of the ranch and of its dudes was riding... To take care of all this riding there was a complex of constructions. There were two big corrals, a long low saddle shed (never "tack room") open on one side...hitching fence opposite the saddle shed, and back beyond all this the barn and blacksmith shop.²³

Struthers Burt supported the idea of park expansion. The Bar BC and the Three Rivers Ranch hosted people supporting both sides of the argument. Struther's son, Nathaniel remembered several heated discussions between 1930 and 1950. In *Jackson Hole Journal* he summed up the differing viewpoints. "The opposition was fundamentally based on plain instinctive hatred of government encroachment. The support was based on equally instinctive hatred of commercial encroachment."²⁴

Burt and Carncross gave up the Bar BC in 1930. The Burt family moved farther north to the Three Rivers Ranch. Irving P. Corse controlled the Bar BC after that. The Snake River Land Company purchased it and provided a lifetime lease to Corse and his second

²⁰ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 148.

²¹ Orin and Lorraine Bonney, *Bonney's Guide*, 82-83.

²² Zoë Hardy, "The Life Span of a Dude Ranch: The Bar BC 1912-1989," *Teton*, 21 (1989), 21.

²³ Nathaniel Burt, *Jackson Hole Journal*, 34-35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 129-130.



Bar BC Ranch in 1990

Leslie Emerson Smith

wife. He died in 1953 and Mrs. Corse operated the ranch, run-down as it was, until 1986. This historic dude ranch is now part of Grand Teton National Park.²⁵

Directions: Return to the Teton Park Road and go toward the Moose Visitor Center. After passing through the Park gates, take the Moose-Wilson Road south. The private road to the Murie home is on the east.

MURIE HOME

Margaret (Mardy) and Olaus Murie moved to Jackson Hole when Olaus was appointed head of the National Elk Refuge in 1927. Both were avid conservationists and supported the idea of park expansion. Dr. Murie is recognized as the foremost authority on North American elk and caribou. Olaus' private convictions often clashed with the policies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — his employer. He retired in 1945 to become national director of the Wilderness Society, a position he held until 1962. Righter described Olaus Murie as a "man who combined scientific knowledge and love of the wilderness with honesty and openness."²⁶ As mentioned earlier, it was Olaus who was vehemently opposed to the Jackson Hole Wildlife Park.

Mardy Murie was the first female graduate of the University of Alaska. A well-known conservationist, Mrs. Murie continues her crusade. Autobiographical books, *Two In The Far North* and *Wapiti Wilderness*, describe her life in Alaska and Jackson Hole.

Olaus' "naturalist's studio" and some research notes have been retained by his widow in their log home south of Moose. Mardy frequently gives talks to students from

the Teton Science School and to other groups. The Murie home is now part of Grand Teton National Park though Mardy Murie holds a lifetime lease.

Directions: Return to the Moose-Wilson Road and go south. This road, while paved, is narrow and has several curves. At the point where the pavement ends is the gate to the JY Ranch.

JY RANCH

The West, the new summer playground of America. A veritable invasion of eastern tourists has followed the opening of this beautiful country which offers the vacationist, known in the parlance of men of the range as "dude," a solution for the summer vacation problem.

Louis Joy arrived in Jackson Hole in 1907 and established his homestead in 1908. The JY Ranch was the first dude ranch in the area. Struthers Burt partnered with Joy until Burt established the Bar B C farther north along the Snake River. Owen Wister stayed at the JY while his cabin was constructed at the R Lazy S Ranch just to the south. (The Wister cabin was dismantled and reconstructed at Medicine Bow, Wyoming, in the mid-1970s).

A Pennsylvania businessman, Henry Stewart, purchased the JY in 1920. Stewart recognized the recreational value of Jackson Hole and was an active

²⁵ "Records and History on the Bar B C Ranches," *Jackson Hole Museum Newsletter*, 4 (August 1986), 2-3.

²⁶ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 128.

supporter of the idea discussed at Maud Noble's in 1923. Under Stewart's ownership, the JY prospered.

The boundaries of the 1929 Grand Teton National Park included the JY Ranch. Stewart asked \$250,000 for the ranch when the Snake River Land Company first approached him. He received \$90,000 in 1932. Considered the "most scenic" of all dude ranches in Jackson Hole, Rockefeller and his sons favored it. Rockefeller requested that the JY be retained by his family. Rockefeller wrote:

My children are greatly interested in this ranch and are anxious that I should retain it, for the present at least, for the general use of the family. This I shall presumably do. However, so long as the Park line remains as it is, it would be possible for me to give the whole or any part of this land to the Park at any time in the future without any government action. On the other hand, if our family should permanently retain it, no harm would be done.²⁷

The JY remains in the possession of the Rockefeller family today. This "special treatment" has left some bitter feelings. Nathaniel Burt expressed just such a sentiment, "...the fact that the Rockefeller family itself bought and kept the old JY Ranch ...instead of selling it to the Snake River Land Company as my father sold his ranch — this too has not been popular... The JY Ranch is well kept and in good hands; but private holdings of that kind in the park were not supposed to be encouraged."²⁸

The JY and Bar BC ranches led the way for others to provide services for the dudes. As Nathaniel Burt wrote, "Though the two originals, the Bar B C and the JY, no longer operate as true dude ranches, their descendants, whether as private ranches or as active dude ranches, still proliferate."²⁹

Directions: Return to Jackson Hole. Either continue on the dirt portion of the Moose-Wilson Road or backtrack to Moose and return to Highway 287. The final stop of this tour is at the National Elk Refuge.

NATIONAL ELK REFUGE

JACKSON, Wyo. Feb. 7, 1911. — Unless fed, five thousand elk will perish within two weeks.

S.N. LEEK³⁰

Jackson Hole and the surrounding mountains are home to the largest elk herd in the world. Theodore Roosevelt referred to the Jackson area as the "home of all homes for the elk."³¹

It is thought that there were 60,000 or more elk in the Jackson Hole area in the 19th century. Summer

range encompassed the surrounding mountains as far north as Yellowstone. During the winter months the elk would congregate in the Jackson vicinity. Dean Krakel II has pointed out that the elk population was kept in check by disease, predators and starvation.³²

With the arrival of settlers in the region, much of the traditional range of the herds was used for livestock and crops. Fences blocked the age-old migration routes. There was not sufficient amounts of grass left to feed the elk so thousands starved.

The winter of 1910-11 was particularly harsh — thus the message sent by Stephen Leek to communities throughout Wyoming. Three days later the first load of hay arrived. Leek was among the first to help feed the elk. With his photographs and lectures, he brought attention to the decimation of the elk.

After federal investigation concerning the starving elk, a refuge project was initiated. The National Elk Refuge was established August 10, 1912, for the care and preservation of the elk. From 2,800 acres in 1912, the refuge has increased to 23,754 acres. Elk may be the primary reason for the refuge but other wildlife benefit as well. Moose, mule deer, bighorn sheep and a small flock of trumpeter swans live here.

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This "tour" discussed only a few of the places significant to the creation of Grand Teton National Park. There are many more scattered throughout the Park but their existence is ignored by the National Park Service. Many of these, such as Leek's Lodge and the Pfeifer Homestead, have been lost in the last five years. Nonetheless, remaining historic sites help tell the story of the struggle to preserve the view.

²⁷ Righter, *Crucible for Conservation*, 9.

²⁸ Nathaniel Burt, *Jackson Hole Journal*, 142.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁰ Righter, *A Teton Country Anthology*, 165.

³¹ Dean Krakel II, *Season of the Elk*. (Kansas City: Lowell Press, 1976), 51.

³² *Ibid.*, 53.

Tamsen Emerson Hert is the Wyoming Bibliographer at the University of Wyoming Libraries. She holds masters degrees in library science and American history from Emporia State University in Kansas. A regular contributor to Annals, this article stems from her interest in historic structures in national parks.



Nathaniel P.
Langford

Montana
Historical
Society

First Ascent of The Great

During the 19th and early part of the 20th century, the world achieved numerous first ascents of Mount Everest and the Matterhorn in the Alps, Mt. McKinley in Alaska, and countless others in the west and Alaska, and countless others in the east. Credit for a first ascent often carried the weight of a lifetime. One of the most long lasting and bitter controversies in the place in the late 19th and early 20th century was the first ascent in northwest Wyoming. The debate raged over the first scientific expedition led by Ferdinand B. Hayden and his party in 1898. This controversy over the first ascent, marked by the individual reputations, and not a few cha-

Recognition of being first to summit the Grand carried tremendous prestige since few peaks in North America offer such a striking and imposing profile. The Grand has been aptly called "America's Matterhorn" for its angular ridges and impressively pointed top. Soaring some 7000 feet above Jackson Hole, (13,770 feet above sea level) the Grand captivates viewers from every angle by its sheer North and West faces, its high rising East Ridge, its numerous snowfields, and its distinctively angled summit, all which mark it as one of the great peaks in the entire Rocky Mountain chain.¹

Fur trappers who hunted for beaver and convened at the yearly rendezvous during the 1820s and 1830s knew the Grand and its sister Tetons as dominant landmarks. The peaks loomed far above the west side of Jackson Hole, the long and narrow valley named for David Jackson, a fur trader.² Few of these traders, of course, paused to contemplate a climb up the Grand or any of the high peaks, no doubt because of their keener interest in trapping beaver. Moreover, the sharp summits and looming granite walls of the great peaks undoubtedly provoked a sense of awe if not fear.

Nevertheless, it was fur traders and trappers who first attempted to climb the highest of the Tetons. In 1843, a trader named Michaud LeClaire made the first known attempt on the Grand. Beaver Dick Leigh, another trader who lived in Idaho and frequented Jackson Hole in the middle of the 19th century, testified to Michaud's attempt and to his failure to reach the summit. Leigh himself hiked into Garnet Canyon below the Grand in 1858 and may have reached the Lower Saddle between the Grand and Middle Tetons. During the next several years other parties endeavored to scale the peak only to experience similar disappointment.³

¹ For a beautifully written and classic description of the Grand Teton range the place to start is Fritiof Fryxell, *The Tetons: Interpretations of a Mountain Landscape* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); for a more personal encounter with the peaks by a climber see Robert Leonard Reid, *Mountains of the Great Blue Dream* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 19-21.

² A good introduction to the mountain fur trade with numerous references to David Jackson is Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964).

The Grand Teton: Controversy

by Mark Harvey

Centuries mountaineers around the of such major peaks as Mount Blanc and Mt. McKinley in the Pacific North-orth American and Canadian Rockies. ors and sparked fierce competition. mountaineering controversies took er the first ascent of the Grand Teton cades between members of an 1872 and four climbers of a private climbing and" resembled those surrounding big egos, the burnishing of profes-saults.



William Owen

American
Heritage
Center

In the summer of 1872, two members of Ferdinand Hayden's Geological Survey of the Territories claimed the first ascent. Nathaniel P. Langford, the first superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, and James Stevenson, ascended the Grand on July 29, although whether they reached the true summit remains a contentious issue.⁴ Approaching the Tetons from the west and their camp in Alaska Basin, Langford, Stevenson and several others climbed the steep slopes up to the huge Lower Saddle which lies between the Grand and the Middle Tetons at an elevation of 11,600 feet. From there, they scrambled upward and to the north an additional fifteen hundred feet and reached another higher saddle; then—so they claimed—they surmounted the final six hundred feet by utilizing a huge sheet of ice into which they cut steps with their boots.⁵ Upon gaining the summit, Langford wrote later, "We felt that we had achieved a victory, and that it was something for ourselves to know—a solitary satisfaction—that we were the first white men who had ever stood upon the spot we then occupied. Others might come after us, but to be the first where a hundred had failed was no

braggart boast."⁶

Langford's description of the topmost portion of the Grand above the Upper Saddle was vague, generating considerable doubts about their claimed ascent in later years. However, his summary of the climb, published in *Scribner's Monthly* magazine in 1873, proves that the two men reached the Upper Saddle and the lower subsidiary peak just west of the Grand's summit. Here,

³ Leigh N. Ortenburger and Reynold G. Jackson, *A Climber's Guide to the Teton Range* 3rd ed. (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1996), 152; Orrin H. Bonney and Lorraine G. Bonney, *The Grand Controversy: The Pioneer Climbs in the Teton Range and the Controversial First Ascent of the Grand Teton* (New York: American Alpine Club Press, 1992), 17-19.

⁴ Stevenson was in charge of one of Hayden's Survey divisions, responsible for exploring the Tetons and vicinity. Langford, in addition to serving as the first superintendent of Yellowstone, had explored the Yellowstone region in 1870. See Nathaniel Pitt Langford, *The Discovery of Yellowstone Park: Journal of the Washburn Expedition to the Yellowstone and Firehole Rivers in the Year 1870* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972).

⁵ Nathaniel P. Langford, "The Ascent of Mount Hayden," *Scribner's Monthly* 6 (June 1873), 144.

⁶ *Ibid.*



Scribner's Monthly, June 1873.

atop the lower peak, Langford and Stevenson discovered "a circular enclosure, six feet in diameter, composed of granite slabs, set up endwise, about five feet in height. . . . Evidently the work of the Indians, it could not have been constructed less than a century ago, and it is not improbable that its age may reach back for many centuries."⁷ Their discovery gave rise to the name Enclosure for the lower peak, the summit of which can be reached by climbers today in only a few minutes from the Upper Saddle.⁸

Langford's article in *Scribner's Monthly* made clear that the Enclosure was not on the summit of the Grand but lower down on a side peak. However, confusion over its location emerged soon after their climb, and helped spark the controversy in its earliest phase. In

his official report of the 1872 Survey, Ferdinand Hayden wrote that the Enclosure was on the main summit of the Grand. Langford understandably cringed at reading Hayden's words because if accepted as true the conclusion could easily be drawn that he and Stevenson did not attain the highest summit but merely the lower one at the Enclosure. Indeed, some of their colleagues in the survey speculated as much, surmising that Langford and Stevenson could not see the actual summit which was hidden in the clouds. Langford did not understand why Hayden could have been confused about the location of the Enclosure, since Langford had spoken with Hayden about their climb on several occasions. In any event, Hayden's report helped to ignite the controversy by confirming existing doubts among various members of the Survey that the two men had reached the summit.⁹ In later years Langford tried to correct Hayden's error by citing his own *Scribner's* article, which clearly stated that the Enclosure was located on the lower peak.

Meanwhile, in the years following the alleged first ascent, others attempted to scale the Grand. A party of four members of the Hayden survey tried in 1877, including one Thomas Cooper, who later figured prominently in the controversy that emerged full blown in 1898. Cooper and his party reached the Lower Saddle and possibly the Upper Saddle, but not the summit. The following year, 1878, still another Hayden Survey party planned an attempt. This time, the two lead climbers, both of whom had ascended Mount Blanc in the French Alps the year before, were unable to make the ascent because of lost mules at their base camp. Their third partner, A. D. Wilson, reached the Enclosure with a large theodolite, a tool he used to make triangulation measurements. Proof of Wilson's having reached the Enclosure appeared nearly a century later. In 1975, Leigh Ortenburger, author of *The Climber's Guide to the Teton Range*, discovered with his daughters a metal matchbox in the rocks at the top of the Enclosure with Wilson's name scratched on its side.¹⁰

More than a decade passed with little or no climbing activity. Then, in 1891, William Owen and his wife Emma Matilda, along with two others, reached a point above the Lower Saddle. This proved to be the first of several attempts by Owen to scale the Grand. Two years later, a Captain Charles H. Kieffer, stationed at Yellowstone National Park, attempted the Grand with two other soldiers, Logan Newell and John Rhyen, and they claimed to have reached the top by one of the southern ridges on the peak. If Kieffer and his party did in-

⁷ *Ibid.*, 145.

⁸ Ortenburger and Jackson, *Climber's Guide*, 200-201.

⁹ This point comes from Langford's letter to Henry Gannett, April 28, 1897, quoted in Bonney and Bonney, 78.

¹⁰ Ortenburger and Jackson, *Climber's Guide*, 152.

deed reach the summit, however, they did little to publicize the fact. The only known evidence of this climb is Kieffer's letter and sketch drawing of the Grand which he sent to William Owen in 1899.¹¹ Thus, Kieffer's claimed ascent also remains a matter of dispute.

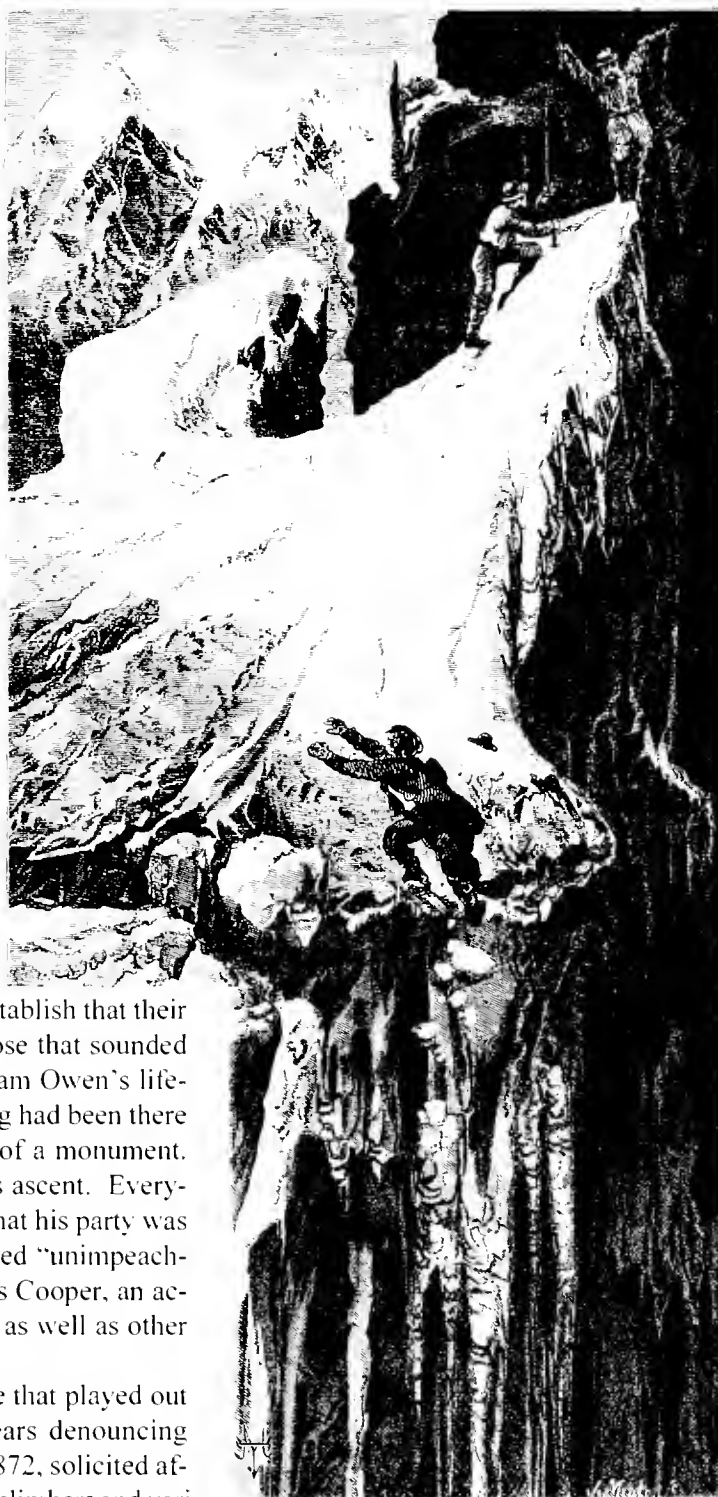
Finally, on August 11, 1898, William Owen and three friends, the Reverend Franklin Spalding, John Shive, and Frank Petersen, reached the summit by climbing the upper West face above the Upper Saddle and by the route that now bears two of their names: Owen-Spalding. Upon reaching the top at four o'clock in the afternoon, the four men took in the magnificent view, carved their names into a rock, and placed a banner of the Rocky Mountain Club which had sponsored the climb.¹² Two days later the party returned for a second ascent. This time Petersen, Shive, and Spalding climbed to the summit where they built a large rock cairn, while Owen took photographs of them from the Enclosure. In subsequent days numerous observers, including T. M. Bannon of the Geological Survey, saw the banner and stone monument from the valley floor through field glasses. The 1898 climb was thus well documented.¹³

A month later Owen wrote an article about the party's success which appeared in the *New York Herald*. Owen clearly intended his account to establish that their triumph was indisputably the first ascent. In prose that sounded the dominant theme of what soon became William Owen's life-long campaign, he asserted that "No human being had been there before. Not a stone was turned. No semblance of a monument. Not the slightest shadow of a record of previous ascent. Everything just as Nature left it."¹⁴ Owen felt certain that his party was the first, but he also relied on what he considered "unimpeachable" evidence including an affidavit by Thomas Cooper, an acquaintance of Langford and Stevenson in 1872, as well as other evidence.

The *Herald* article soon ignited a fierce debate that played out over the next several decades. Owen spent years denouncing Langford's and Stevenson's claimed ascent of 1872, solicited affidavits from participants, and corresponded with climbers and various experts on such topics as mosquitos above timberline and the reliability of aneroid barometers which Langford had used to estimate the height of the Grand.

¹¹ Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 64-65. Kieffer's letter to Owen of April 3, 1899, and sketch of the Teton and route he ascended on the Grand appears in "Subject File—Mountain, Grand Teton," American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming.

¹² William Owen, "Grand Teton's Summit," *New York Herald*, September 18, 1898.



BY THOMAS MORAN
NARROW ESCAPE OF MR. HAMPE

Scribner's Monthly, June 1873

¹³ *Ibid*; Ortenburger and Jackson, *Climber's Guide*, 153; Frank Spalding, "The Teton Ascent," *Laramie Republican*, August 18, 1898, in Box 4, William Owen Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming (hereafter cited as Owen Papers, AHC).

¹⁴ Owen, "Grand Teton's Summit," September 18, 1898.



American Heritage Center

"Two days later the party returned for a second ascent. This time Peterson, Shive, and Spalding climbed to the summit where they built a large rock cairn, while Owen took photographs of them."

Owen's doggedness in attempting to prove that the 1898 ascent was the first to reach the summit of the Grand became so vigorous that not a few observers came to resent his campaign. Some did so because he all but ignored the other men of the ascent team for their contributions to the climb. In particular, Owen gave little credit to Frank Spalding who discovered the route from the Upper Saddle to the summit and led the climb. Spalding's lead was an act of tremendous courage given the unknown hazards on the climb, the route finding challenges, and the terrific exposure beyond the Upper Saddle. Others resented Owen's efforts out of respect for Langford and Stevenson (the latter died in 1888) and they regarded Owen's actions as an attack on their character. To a large extent Owen did himself no favors in the court of public opinion. In their recent book on the controversy, Orrin and Lorraine Bonney portray Owen as a man obsessed with his place in history who manipulated evidence, misrepresented the views of others and "made a virtual career out of his obsession to be 'first'."¹⁵

Owen based his case that Langford and Stevenson did not attain the summit in 1872 partly on the fact that they left no cairn or any physical evidence. Since it was a widely practiced and standard procedure of climbers to erect such cairns or some other type of monument, Owen felt their failure to do so offered powerful evidence indicting their claim. Frank Spalding agreed,

telling his fellow climbers repeatedly on the descent in 1898 that no self-respecting climber who attained such a summit would fail to build a cairn.¹⁶ Langford, for his part, downplayed the issue, citing the success of a climb by C. E. Faye in the Canadian Rockies in prior years for which no cairn was built.¹⁷ Defenders of Langford also pointed out that he and Stevenson lacked sufficient time on their 1872 climb to build a cairn. (Indeed, Owen, Shive, Petersen, and Spalding did not build a cairn on the 1898 ascent due to lack of time; they erected the cairn two days later upon their return).

Since the lack of physical evidence had not settled the matter, Owen obtained information which he considered even more persuasive: an affidavit from Thomas Cooper. This affidavit, along with Owen's own essay, was published in an issue of *Forest and Stream* in November, 1898. Owen had first met Cooper in 1896, having learned that Cooper was an experienced packer who might be willing to work for Owen on one of his surveys. When Owen met Cooper he had no knowledge of Cooper's familiarity with Langford and Stevenson, nor did he then have any reason to question their claim of having reached the summit in 1872. Thus, when Cooper informed Owen that he had been a packer

¹⁵ Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 121-22.

¹⁶ John Shive to W. O. Owen, August 29, 1924, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

¹⁷ Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 96-97.

with the Hayden Survey in 1872 and that he knew that Langford and Stevenson had not made the summit. Owen's competitive instincts were fired. Following the success of his own party's ascent in 1898, Owen requested a full account from Cooper of his recollections from 1872.

In his 1898 affidavit, Cooper indicated having been a member of the USGS and the Wheeler Expedition in 1872, and to have known Langford, Stevenson, and Professor Hayden. He stated that "all members" of the USGS Survey had been drawn into the dispute over Langford's and Stevenson's claim of reaching the summit and that several of them had doubted their claim. According to Cooper's affidavit, Hayden himself remarked in 1878 that he "knew their statements were not correct [and] knew Stevenson and Langford had never been on top of the peak." Most importantly, Cooper's affidavit described a personal encounter with James Stevenson in Rawlins in October, 1877, when Stevenson admitted to Cooper that he and Langford had reached the Upper Saddle and the Enclosure in 1872 but did not attain the summit.¹⁸

Langford wasted no time challenging Tom Cooper's affidavit. In a subsequent issue of *Forest and Stream*, Langford denied having known Cooper in 1872 and he cited testimony of Henry Gannett, chief Geographer of the Hayden Survey in 1872, who stated that Cooper was not a member of the Survey that year. Cooper had also claimed that Langford had been in charge of one of Hayden's divisions, but Langford denied this and

insisted that he "was never a member of the Survey, nor had charge of a division."¹⁹ Langford concluded that Cooper's affidavit of 1898, had been "well prepared in some respects, [but] exhibits the inherent weakness of a declaration, which, having a slight coloring of truth, is chiefly notorious for a disregard of facts."²⁰

Owen did not rely on Cooper's affidavit alone. In the fall of 1898, he also obtained an affidavit from Wyoming Governor William A. Richards. Before entering politics, Richards had been a civil engineer and surveyor. In 1874, he had been at work marking the western boundary of Wyoming and had encountered Beaver Dick Leigh, who had also been a member of Langford's and Stevenson's party in 1872. When Richards shared a copy of Langford's *Scribner's* article with Beaver Dick, the latter "emphatically stated" that their claim of reaching the summit was untrue.²¹

Responding to Richards' affidavit in *Forest and Stream*, Langford denied that Beaver Dick Leigh was on the 1872 ascent party and claimed that on July 29, the day of the ascent, Beaver Dick was fifty miles away

¹⁸ Cooper's affidavit was taken in Laramie County on October 21, 1898; it appears in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC; it was also published in *Forest and Stream*, November 5, 1898, and more recently in Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 417-419.

¹⁹ Langford's letter appeared under the title "The Ascent of the Grand Teton," *Forest and Stream*, November 19, 1898.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Richards' affidavit was written on October 4, 1898, and appeared in *Forest and Stream*, November 5, 1898. A copy is found in Box 4, Owen Papers, AHC.

"Camp Owen, Aug. 12, 1898." Pictured (l to r): Petersen, Cooper (kneeling), Spalding, McDermont, Shive. Photograph by W. O. Owen. Owen collection, American Heritage Center.



searching for a route into the Firehole River Basin. Langford's statement prompted Governor Richards to reaffirm his original statement in a letter to the editor of *Forest and Stream*.²² Langford then obtained testimony from Beaver Dick himself in which Leigh admitted to having been far removed from the area of the Grand.

Langford also gained the support of his friend Hiram Martin Chittenden who wrote a twelve-page report on the Grand debate. As a prominent engineer and also historian of the American West, Chittenden's support gave Langford a powerful ally. Chittenden criticized Cooper's affidavit for several inaccuracies, and he indicated that while Stevenson had admitted to Cooper of never having reached the summit of the Grand, he evidently never admitted the point to anyone else, including his own wife whom Chittenden interviewed. "So far as I have been able to ascertain," Chittenden wrote, "Cooper is the only person whom Stevenson ever told that he did not ascend this mountain."²³

The affidavits fully launched the controversy in the weeks following the 1898 ascent, which quickly developed into a war of words between Owen, Langford, Cooper, Richards, and Chittenden. Yet the affidavits merely added fuel to the fire rather than helping to resolve the issue. Each side believed that it had the best witnesses and therefore the most reliable information about the 1872 climb. Owen considered Cooper's affidavit unimpeachable, while Langford believed it was filled with errors and misleading information. Not surprisingly, the debate began to focus increasingly on the character of various participants. Owen, for his part, obtained a statement from a Judge Charles Potter, of Cheyenne, who testified to Cooper's responsible character, "good citizenship and integrity."²⁴

As the battle over the affidavits settled into a contest over who said what and when, the entire dispute increasingly came to focus on what many regarded as the single most important primary source document of the 1872 climb: Langford's essay published in *Scribner's Monthly* in June of 1873, "The Ascent of Mount Hayden." The essay remains to this day the central piece of evidence in the dispute, owing in part to recent research which reveals that Langford wrote several drafts of the piece before it appeared in *Scribner's Monthly* in June of 1873. Leigh Ortenburger, the late co-author of the authoritative climbing guide to the Tetons, spent years researching the Owen-Langford controversy, and examined Langford's several drafts carefully. While Ortenburger's research has not yet been published, those familiar with his work claim that it raises numerous questions about Langford's

motives since he apparently changed his story in the various drafts.²⁵

Yet the published version from *Scribner's Monthly* also sparked considerable debate. In their recent book, *The Grand Controversy*, Orrin and Lorraine Bonney, long-time Teton climbers and historians of the range, scrutinized Langford's article carefully and concluded that it provided a clear and "straightforward" account of the topmost portion of the Grand above the Upper Saddle. The Bonneys vigorously defended the 1872 climb as the first ascent. However, their use of evidence and their overall argument can be questioned and their book should not be taken as the last word on the subject.²⁶

To their credit, the Bonneys devoted considerable space to Langford's observations on the climb and to his description of the uppermost portion of the Grand. While they enthusiastically endorsed his description as a reasonable and accurate account of today's Owen-Spalding route, the fact remains that Langford provided little detail of the configuration of the mountain above the Upper Saddle. As a result, many climbers familiar with the peak remain doubtful that Langford and Stevenson were actually there in 1872.

Langford's description of the final six hundred feet of the Grand beyond the Upper Saddle was short, only three or four paragraphs (depending on how one interprets the essay). In this section Langford first recounted Stevenson's unceasing and eventually successful efforts to scale an overhanging rock. Then, Langford took one long paragraph to describe a huge sheet of ice

²² Langford's letter to *Forest and Stream*, Richards' letter to the editor, December 13, 1898, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

²³ Chittenden's "report" was actually a twelve-page letter, February 14, 1899, to editor of *Forest and Stream*; Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

²⁴ Potter's statement, October 21, 1898, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

²⁵ Author's interview with Reynold Jackson, April 7, 1999. Ortenburger died in a wildfire which engulfed a neighborhood of Oakland, California, in 1991. His history of the Teton range has not yet been published.

²⁶ This author disagrees with parts of the Bonneys' book and questions their argument that Langford and Stevenson made the top in 1872. Although their book is based on a good deal of research and offers much useful information, the conclusions they draw from the evidence can be questioned at numerous points. In a sentence which reveals something of their approach, the Bonneys conclude that "Just as a key was needed to unlock the summit of the Grand, so too is a key needed to unlock the mystery of the 1872 ascent, and the key is in believing that Langford's account is true. Once that has been done everything else falls into place." [p. 236]. This seems akin to accepting the guilt or innocence of a charged individual on trial in order to help make sense of the evidence brought before the court. The evidence should be weighed in order to reach the conclusion, not the other way around.

which clung to the uppermost part of the Grand and which he said proved to be the key to reaching the summit. By cutting steps into the ice with their boots, Langford and Stevenson ascended the hazardous ice, then clambered "over the fragments and piles of granite which lay between us and the summit," reaching the top at 3 p.m.²⁷

Leaving aside the ice sheet for the moment, the primary problem with Langford's account was its vagueness. Many subsequent climbers who read it recognized little about the upper 600 feet of the Grand—today's Owen-Spalding route. That route, though not at all technically difficult, does entail distinctive and memorable pitches.²⁸ From the Upper Saddle the route moves to the north where it follows a narrow and extremely exposed ledge out along the western face of the Grand for about 300 feet. It passes along the Belly Roll, a huge flake of rock; from there climbers reach a remarkable and extremely exposed ledge called the Crawl or Cooning Place, about 18 inches wide and 15 feet long that lies directly underneath an overhang. Frank Spalding, leader of the 1898 climb, found that in order to cross the ledge he had to remove the camera strapped to his back and crawl on his stomach all the way across, while trying to avoid peering over his left side down a

sheer 3000-foot wall to the bottom. Once past the Crawl, the route continues up the Double Chimney for 25 feet, at which point climbers can choose to ascend the Owen Chimney or the Catwalk. Higher up, these two alternatives converge below Sargent's Chimney. Once past the final chimney, the climb involves scrambling to the top.²⁹

Langford provided little description of these distinctive portions of the climb. Given his flowery and at times dramatic prose, it is especially curious that he offered no account of the Crawl section, the narrow ledge under the overhang.³⁰ To defend him on this point, the Bonneys pointed out that Langford and Stevenson might not have crawled across the ledge but might have done what virtually every climber does to cross it today—use the ledge for a handhold and find good footholds down below. If Langford and Stevenson did pass the Crawl in this manner, then the experience would not have been so memorable as it was for Spalding, Owen, Shive, and Petersen in 1898. If so, they may have had no reason to mention it.³¹

But Langford's account came under fire in other ways, especially his discussion of the large ice sheet. Langford described a huge hanging sheet of ice, lying atop the rock at a 70-degree angle, and noted that he and Stevenson approached the ice with considerable trepidation. "Beside the danger of incurring a slide which would insure a rapid descent to the base of the mountain," he wrote, "there was the other risk, that the frail fastenings which held the ice-sheet to the rocks might give way while we were crawling over it, and the whole field be carried with us down the terrible precipice." Yet knowing how close they were to the top they took heart and "laying hold of the rocky points at the side of the ice-sheet, we broke with our feet in its surface a series of steps, up which we ascended to its topmost junction with the rock."³² In a letter to Owen in 1898, Langford said that "we never could have reached the summit but for the aid of the sheet of ice, which formed our Ladder."³³



American Heritage Center

W. O. Owen "ready for a climb" in 1925. "The banner on the wall is my old metal flag we planted on the summit of the Teton in 1898," Owen wrote on the back of the photograph.

²⁷ Langford, "Ascent of Mount Hayden," 144.

²⁸ A "pitch" refers to a small segment of the overall climb, often equal to the length of a rope.

²⁹ For a description of the route see Ortenburger and Jackson, *Climber's Guide*, 157-159; see also Spalding to Langford, December 5, 1898, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

³⁰ Paul Petzoldt made this point in a letter to the editor of *Outdoor Life*. The letter is not dated but was probably written in the fall of 1924. Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

³¹ Bonney and Bonney, *The Grand Controversy*, 118.

³² Langford, "Ascent of Mount Hayden," 143-44.

³³ Langford to Owen, September 15, 1898, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

Owen and other climbers harbored many doubts. Frank Petersen, a member of the 1898 party, remarked that such an ice-sheet, "after two months exposure to a summer sun, could not possibly cling to the hard, steep, granite face on the west side of the Grand Teton. It is simply impossible."³⁴ Paul Petzoldt, who began his long climbing career in the Tetons during the 1920s, believed that ice sheets of such size and extent as Langford described normally do not disappear within a few years, yet he knew of no such ice sheet on the upper west side of the Grand. Even if the ice sheet did exist in 1872, Petzoldt doubted that Langford and Stevenson could have kicked holes in the hard ice. "Climbing ice sheets on that slant is not probable and the kicking process must have resulted in some badly bruised toes. For the latter Langford does not account."³⁵ Another piece of evidence challenging the presence of the ice sheet is a photograph taken by William Henry Jackson from the top of Table Mountain within a few days of Langford's and Stevenson's alleged ascent in 1872. The picture displays the upper West Face of the Grand but shows no large draping sheet of ice.³⁶

If the presence of the ice sheet raised many doubts, so too did additional details in Langford's essay. Once above the ice, Langford reported seeing fresh tracks of "that American Ibex, the mountain sheep,—the only animals known to clamber up the sides of our loftiest peaks." In the next sentence he mentioned seeing "flowers also, of beauteous hue, and delicate fragrance, [which] peeped through the snow"³⁷ But in the minds of some, Langford's most fanciful sighting was mosquitos on the summit itself.³⁸

These sightings provoked a great outcry from Owen, Petersen, Spalding, and Shive and their defenders. As for the mountain sheep, Shive claimed to have "hunted these animals for thirty years over the Teton mountains and I *know* that no sheep that ever breathes could get that close to the top of the peak unless he had wings It arouses my curiosity, too, to know what a sheep would be doing three thousand feet or so above the point where he could get anything to eat."³⁹ Others similarly denounced the sheep sighting, Petersen saying in an affidavit that "a sheep might get to the 'Enclosure' if he were *driven* there; but he could no more climb the last 600 feet of the Grand Teton than he could climb a telephone pole."⁴⁰ Numerous climbers since have agreed that the precipitous walls on the upper Grand make the presence of such wildlife an impossibility. They have also expressed doubts about wildflowers, based on the height of the Grand and the complete lack of soil or vegetation near the top. While flow-

ers such as Sky Pilots have been seen between the Lower and Upper Saddles, no reports of flowers between the Upper Saddle and the summit have ever been recorded.⁴¹

Owen and his compatriots could hardly contain their laughter at Langford's claim of mosquitos on the summit. Shive, a resident of Jackson Hole for nearly three decades and a hunter in various mountain ranges in northwest Wyoming, said "never in my life have I seen a mosquito 500 feet above timber line, which, in this vicinity of the Tetons is about 10,200 feet above the sea."⁴² Owen, of course, left nothing to chance. He consulted with an entomologist, L. O. Howard of the United States Department of Agriculture, on the likelihood of finding mosquitos thousands of feet above timberline. Howard replied that little research had been done on the matter and "science has not determined the point about which you inquire." But Howard was doubtful that mosquitos would breed above timberline and he believed they "would not rise above this line unless carried by strong currents of air."⁴³

Two additional points from Langford's essay also provoked debate. If Langford and Stevenson did reach the summit surely they would have had a sense of how the top actually appeared. In this regard, Langford's description of the summit as a "bald, denuded head ... worn smooth" by the elements" gave further support to Owen and his allies.⁴⁴ Far from being a bald or smooth cap of granite, the top of the Grand is, as Frank Petersen described it, "a mass of chopped and broken blocks varying in size from a tea kettle to a cook-stove." Referring to Langford's choice of words of a bald summit, Stevenson remarked that "no intelligent man, had he ever seen the summit of the Grand Teton, would have written such a description as this."⁴⁵

³⁴ Petersen's affidavit, dated September 9, 1924, taken in Teton County, is in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

³⁵ Petzoldt to editor of *Outdoor Life*, n.d., but probably the fall of 1924. Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

³⁶ Reynold Jackson interview, April 7, 1999.

³⁷ Langford, "Ascent of Mount Hayden," 144-45.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁹ John Shive to William Owen, August 29, 1924, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁴⁰ Petersen affidavit, Sept. 9, 1924, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁴¹ See William Owen's letter, "The Ascent of the Grand Teton," *Forest and Stream*, December 31, 1898, Box 3, Owen Papers, AHC; Renny Jackson interview, April 7, 1999.

⁴² Shive to Owen, August 29, 1924, Box 2, Owen Papers.

⁴³ L. O. Howard to Owen, December 3, 1898, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁴⁴ Langford, "Ascent of Mount Hayden," 144.

⁴⁵ Frank Petersen affidavit, Teton County, Wyoming, Sept. 9, 1924, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC; Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 119.

A final matter focused on the elevation of the Grand Teton. Langford, who carried an aneroid barometer on the 1872 ascent, stated in his *Scribner's Monthly* article that the summit was 13,762 feet (above sea level).⁴⁶ When Owen estimated the top of the peak to be 13,800 feet two and a half decades later, Langford felt that the two figures were so close that Owen's estimate substantiated his own and thereby bolstered his own case. Owen, wanting to leave no evidence of Langford's unchallenged, eventually found a way to discredit Langford's figure with assistance from the U.S. Geological Survey. In 1926, Julian Sears, acting director of the Survey, informed Owen that the agency had concluded that readings from aneroid barometers were very unreliable, "even in the hands of skilled observers."⁴⁷ Sears indicated that readings from aneroids were known to have been inaccurate by several thousand feet. This comforted Owen greatly and enabled him to place yet another nail into Langford's and Stevenson's claims.⁴⁸

The Owen-Langford controversy waxed and waned for at least three decades after the 1898 ascent. Remarkably, as *The Climber's Guide to the Teton Range* points out, no one revisited the summit of the Grand until 1923, two and a half decades after that ascent. Beginning in 1923 several parties made the ascent, and the publicity resulting from them helped to revive the old controversy between Owen and Langford. (Langford died in 1909). Owen himself climbed the Grand in August, 1924, at the age of 65, more than a quarter century after his initial climb.⁴⁹ By now, it may be said that William Owen had time and the benefit of changing circumstances in Jackson Hole on his side. During the 1920s several climbers, including the young and courageous Paul Petzoldt, had reached the top of the Grand and had verified much of Owen's doubts about Langford and Stevenson. Owen capitalized on their experiences and finally achieved the recognition he had so long sought.

Owen also found that leaders of the town of Jackson and of Teton County could be courted for they did not wish to be associated in any way with such a long standing controversy involving the highest peak in the Teton range. Owen made sure that several prominent citizens of Jackson Hole and of the town of Jackson itself were made aware of what he considered to be grave weaknesses in Langford's and Stevenson's case, and he found them all in agreement that the great controversy should be brought to an end. Leading businessmen and pillars of Jackson such as Robert E. Miller, W. C. Deloney, Richard Winger, and A. C. McCain subsequently signed a petition which Owen presented to the Teton County Board of Commissioners in 1926.

The petition offered a "resume of evidence" including Cooper's 1898 affidavit and Langford's article from *Scribner's Monthly* with the "inherent improbability of [its] numerous statements." The Teton County commissioners subsequently adopted a resolution denouncing the 1872 ascent by Langford and Stevenson "as spurious and utterly without foundation in fact," and credited Owen, Spalding (now dead), Shive, and Petersen with the first ascent on August 11, 1898.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Langford, "Ascent of Mt. Hayden," 148.

⁴⁷ Sears to Owen, August 23, 1926, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁴⁸ In light of the problems with aneroid barometers as well as the uncertainty of whether the 1872 party reached the summit, it is perhaps amazing that Langford's estimate of 13,762 feet is only eight feet lower than the modern day measurement. See Bonney and Bonney, *Grand Controversy*, 123.

⁴⁹ "Owen Returns to Teton Peak," *Laramie Boomerang*, August 26, 1924.

⁵⁰ The Teton County Commissioners resolution is in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.



Owen holds the plaque commemorating his climb of the Grand. Pictured with him at ceremonies held in July, 1932, are Horace Albright (left) and Sam T. Woodring, the first superintendent of Grand Teton National Park.

Heartened by the commissioners' actions, Owen approached the Wyoming legislature, pressing for a similar resolution. In 1927 the state House of Representatives passed a resolution conferring the honor on the 1898 party, a move that provided official state recognition and stipulated that the state historian "incorporate in the historical records of her office this finding of the Legislature."⁵¹

Additional recognition and officially sanctioned honors were forthcoming in subsequent years. On March 4, 1929, the National Board of Geographic Names approved of Owen's name for the second highest peak in the range, the picturesque spire just to the north of the Grand.⁵² That same year, Congress created Grand Teton National Park to protect the high peaks. Owen took delight in seeing a National Park Service press release announcing the new park in which the NPS credited Owen and his three companions with the first ascent of the Grand, and said of Langford and Stevenson that "it now appears that they climbed one of the higher sister peaks, mistaking it for the Grand Teton."⁵³

On July 30, 1929, Owen attended a ceremony dedicating the newly created Grand Teton National Park. Afterwards, he rode by car to the town of Jackson, joining several other passengers including Dr. Grace Raymond Hebard, who stunned Owen with a report of her recent conversation with William Henry Jackson at Jackson Lake Lodge. Jackson had accompanied the 1872 Hayden survey and had joined Langford and Stevenson's ascent party on the first portion of the climb. Now, almost sixty years later, Jackson had informed Hebard that Langford had admitted to him that he and Stevenson never made the summit. Thrilled by this latest evidence in his favor, Owen quickly asked Hebard to confirm Jackson's statement in writing, and he took affidavits about Hebard's conversation in the car from Allen Austin and Rose Crabtree, residents of Jackson who had also been passengers in the car.⁵⁴ Owen believed that Jackson's statement provided the clinching evidence for the 1898 ascent, if any such evidence were needed.

Perhaps it is safe to say that no final settlement of the Langford-Owen controversy will ever be reached, and it has not been the purpose of this essay to offer any final proof. Certainly if additional diaries or manuscripts are uncovered in the future the case will be revisited again. Yet if final proof seems an unlikely possibility, the fact remains that William Owen triumphed in the dispute decades ago and, until additional information is found, he and his colleagues will

continue to have credit for the first ascent.

By the end of the 1920s much had changed in Jackson Hole, including the growth of the town of Jackson as well as the renewed interest in climbing the peaks. These economic and cultural developments affecting the valley enabled Owen to capitalize on the uncertainties and ambiguities surrounding Langford's and Stevenson's claimed ascent of 1872. By that time, numerous climbers familiar with the Grand simply could not comprehend or follow Langford's description of the Owen-Spalding route. Furthermore, Owen found sympathetic ears and minds among local business leaders who felt that their community's future and its respectability in the eyes of other Wyoming citizens rested in part on having an accurate sense of its own history. Those interests found favor in the state legislature as well. A combination of elements, then, enabled Owen to triumph in the end. Though the 1898 ascent was hardly his triumph alone, Owen's tireless efforts elevated him into the public spotlight and ensured that his name, far more than that of his equally courageous colleagues, was forever identified with the first ascent of the Grand.

⁵¹ Joint Resolution No. 2, Wyoming House of Representatives, February 9, 1927, Box 4, Owen Papers, AHC; "Conqueror of Grand Teton Recognized by Legislature After Lapse of Years," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1927, clipping in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁵² W. O. Owen, letter to the *Wyoming State Tribune*, February 18, 1945, clipping in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁵³ Quoted in Owen's letter to editor of *Jackson Hole Courier*, March 28, 1929, clipping in Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

⁵⁴ Owen letter to *Wyoming State Tribune*, Feb. 18, 1945, Box 2, Owen Papers, AHC.

Mark Harvey is associate professor of history at North Dakota State University, Fargo. His scholarly interests center on the American West and its environmental history, especially national parks and wilderness. He is author of A Symbol of Wilderness: Echo Park and the American Conservation Movement (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1994). He has climbed the Grand Teton on three occasions, the first at the age of 14 in 1971.

A Jackson Hole Life: Verba Lawrence



Slim and Verba Lawrence

Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum collection

By Sherry L. Smith

Jackson Hole is a many-storied landscape. Of course, most of its stories, at least those which have found their way into print, feature men. After all, historians traditionally associate the main themes of that valley's history — fur trapping, big game hunting, homesteading, dude wrangling, park making, ranching and "politicking" — with men.¹

Occasionally one gets a glimpse of women in the midst of Jackson Hole's historical figures: Jenny, trapper Beaver Dick Leigh's Shoshone wife, or Jackson's 1920's all woman city council and mayor. But frankly these women are there as anomalies, interesting for their exoticism, their difference, the spice they add to a stew that is predominantly Anglo and male. In short, for decades Jackson Hole's stories focused on activities deemed important because they were economic and political, those more "public" arenas where men dominated. Moreover, the men's voices were those most easily reclaimed in government documents, in the newspapers which chronicled their actions, and in the letters and diaries that historians sought out in archives. Women, of course, were there all along.



Verba Lawrence

They rarely took public roles, but that does not mean they were invisible. They seldom articulated their opinions in public forums, but that does not mean they were silent. Over the last century, women in Jackson Hole have left an abundance of evidence that they had stories of their own. And they told them. Such stories' transition to the pages of history books merely awaited someone's interest to recapture and re-articulate them.²

This is a story about one of those women who "came to Wyoming long, long time ago now," to borrow a phrase from Jackson Hole songwriter Beth McIntosh's lovely song "Three Women," and who left a rich record of her experiences. Verba Delaney Lawrence arrived in the Tetons in the early 1920's, a teenager looking for work in the valley's budding tourism industry. What she found was a life. For the next fifty years, Verba enjoyed a partnership with her husband Cecil "Slim" Lawrence and an unusual opportunity to enjoy a special corner of the valley through the core years of the twentieth century. The Lawrences served as caretakers for a spectacular property, overlooking Jackson Lake and the majestic Teton Range. Various owners christened that place differently: "Marymere" under John Sargent's ownership, "Mae-Lou" during the William Johnson era, and the "AMK" during the Berolzheimer years.³ Verba deeply loved that place. The importance of it—the centrality of it, really — to the contours of her life is undeniable.

* The author thanks the Wyoming State Historical Society for providing a Lola Homsher Research Grant and the University of Wyoming-NPS Research Center where she and her husband, historian Robert W. Righter, spent six weeks researching and writing. The center is located at the former AMK, Verba Lawrence's home for many years.

¹ Among the best-known works chronicling Jackson Hole history are Robert B. Betts, *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons: The Saga of Jackson Hole, Wyoming* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1978), David J. Saylor, *Jackson Hole, Wyoming* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), and Robert W. Righter, *Crucible for Conservation: The Struggle for Grand Teton National Park* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1982).

² For a recent example see Sherry L. Smith, "A Woman's Life in the Teton Country: Geraldine A. Lucas," *Montana, the Magazine of Western History* 44 (1994): 18-33.

³ For an excellent history of this property see Kenneth L. Diem, Lenore L. Diem, and William C. Lawrence, *A Tale of Dough Gods, Bear Grease, Cantaloupe and Sucker Oil: Marymere/Pinetree/Mae-Lou/AMK Ranch* (Moran, Wyoming: University of Wyoming-National Park Service Research Center, 1986).

However, *her place* in Jackson Hole was not as unlimited as the landscapes which surrounded her. To some degree economic class and gender circumscribed it. An examination of Lawrence's life, then, provides an opportunity to engage some broader questions regarding the relationship between the West as region, women's roles, and women's potential to challenge the boundaries and limits placed upon them by gender expectations and economic status. For the first half of this century, at least, Jackson Holers saw their valley as a remote and isolated one. For some, that meant it was a place where non-traditional roles were more acceptable or, at least, tolerated. Did Jackson Hole's supposed "frontier" existence allow women more freedom to challenge prescribed roles? Did Verba Lawrence even care about such things? And what about social and economic class? Did Jackson Hole offer any special economic opportunities for working class women? How did the wealthy and the people they employed see one another earlier in this century? In a place that used to pride itself on the supposed absence of such social distinctions, does the everyday life of an ordinary woman shed any light on the possible existence of class divisions in Jackson Hole *before* the advent of gated communities and multi-million dollar second homes?⁴

Verba Lawrence was an unpropertied, working class woman, although she probably did not identify herself that way. To a historian, however, Lawrence offers a special opportunity to examine and analyze the experiences of one of Teton County's "service class" — because she was a writer, of a kind. For thirty-seven years Verba kept a diary. Nearly every day she jotted down a line or two in little leatherbound, five year diaries — providing valuable views into the daily life and musings of one of Jackson Hole's less prominent citizens and little known worlds.⁵

In Mary Clearman Blew's book, *Balsamroot*, the author writes about her Aunt Imogene who, like Lawrence, kept diaries for decades. The journals "are filled," in Blew's words, "like a ragbag with the daily doings that make up a life." Reading the diaries, Blew goes on, "is to experience the absolutely linear. A plot sort of emerges, like a river, continuous, with apparently unrelated details bobbing to the surface and then submerging." Moreover, the diaries convey a most compelling sense not only of the immediate, but also of the past. For on "a given page [which] contains five entries for five consecutive years; she could take in at a glance what she hoped for the year before, or the year before that, or what she had dreaded." Finally, Blew says about Aunt Imogene's diaries, "She is place-specific. I could draw a map of that thirty-mile radius

[wherein she lived], re-create its textures out of memory."⁶

All the same holds true of Verba Lawrence's diaries. They are filled with the "ragbag" of commonplace, everyday events. They chronicle the immediate, but also the retrospective. They are linear although, especially during the first two decades, they are almost circular as the patterns of life determined by nature's changing, cyclical seasons, dictated so many aspects of Lawrence's life. Finally she is indeed place specific. For most of their married life Verba and "Slim" Lawrence rarely left the thirty-mile radius of their northern Jackson Hole home. Although she did not own a square inch of it until very late in life, Verba considered this "my country" which she possessed not by legal claim but by virtue of living on it and loving it. In the end, Lawrence was not a particularly introspective person. Perhaps the few lines, the tiny space, allowed per day in such five-year diaries, did not encourage musings beyond the day's detritus. But Verba seemed more given to action than reflection and if she ever pondered deeply on her life and its larger significance, she did not commit such thoughts to paper.

Verba arrived in Jackson Hole from the west. In 1906, one year after her birth in Iowa, Verba Delaney's family moved to Teton Valley, on the west side of the Tetons. The family, which was Mormon, farmed near Alta. Starting in 1921, at age 16, Verba began working in the summer for various Jackson Hole families: the Edicks in Kelly, Frews in Moose and by 1923-24 she waited tables at Ben Sheffield's Teton Lodge in Moran,

⁴ These kinds of questions have particularly attracted the attention of western historians in recent years. See Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979); Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., *The Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988); Ruth B. Moynihan, Susan Armitage and Christine Fischer Dichamp, eds., *So Much To Be Done: Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990); Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, eds., *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); and Dee Garceau, *The Important Things of Life: Women, Work, and Family in Sweetwater County Wyoming, 1880-1929* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

⁵ The Verba Lawrence diaries span the years 1931 to 1968. The diaries reside at the Teton County Historical Society, Jackson, Wyoming. Xerox copies are available at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. All diary entry citations which follow refer to the original diaries at the Teton County Historical Society.

⁶ Mary Clearman Blew, *Balsamroot: A Memoir* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 124-25.

the town that used to sit adjacent to the current Jackson Lake Dam site. It was while working in Moran that Verba met Slim Lawrence, as one would expect, at a dance. Lawrence, a driver for the Lander-Yellowstone Transportation Company in the summers, stayed in one of Sheffield's cabins and punched cattle, hauled wood and served as a guide and butcher for Sheffield during the off-season.⁷

The nature of their courtship reflected the changing patterns of their time, as Victorian manners faded and the unchaperoned, youth culture of the 1920's replaced it. Far from family supervision and control, Verba enjoyed a measure of autonomy and freedom yet, presumably, Victorian sexual standards remained intact. In this respect, her behavior typified that of other rural Wyoming women of her day, whereby independence and loosening family control over courtship stopped short of eastern versions of the "New Woman," who supposedly threw old rules about sexual propriety to the wind. As historian Dee Garceau explained it, in rural Wyoming "unsupervised courtship was double-edged, for it threatened single women with exclusion if they violated its standards. The double moral standard was nearly as effective as chaperones in discouraging single women from sexual expression."⁸

Whatever the intimate details of their courtship, Verba and Slim married in 1929. This was Slim's second marriage.⁹ A few months after the wedding, the couple snared the perfect job: caretaker for William Louis Johnson's place, north of old Moran. Johnson made his fortune as Division Manager of the Eastern Sales Division of the Hoover vacuum cleaner company and in 1926 purchased the John D. Sargent homestead property. The following year he began construction of a two-story log lodge which remains standing to this day. The Johnsons intended this place only as a vacation home (particularly for hunting), however, and so hired Slim and Verba to watch over the property year-round.¹⁰ Tourism, long an element of Teton County's economy, initially brought both Verba and Slim to Jackson Hole. It was the advent of wealthy peoples' "second homes," a phenomenon usually associated only with late twentieth century developments, which provided them with the livelihood, stability and security that lasted five decades.¹¹ In short, outside capital created the framework of the Lawrences' lives.

Slim and Verba moved into the "Mae-Lou Lodge," an amalgamation of William Johnson's wife's name and his middle name, in May 1930.¹² The next six years were the happiest of Verba's life. Although isolation, unrelenting winter weather and hard work characterized her days, Verba loved it all. True, she had to wear

snowshoes to hang clothes out to dry in January, but she did not mind. In fact, Verba was truly a sports-woman—snowshoeing or webbing as they called it, skiing, hunting, dog sledding, fishing and horseback riding whenever the chance arose. "I'm pretty hard to live with if I stay in all day," she reflected in her diary.¹³ As for the absence of people, she preferred it that way. Certainly she welcomed the intermittent visitor or occasional, all-night dance at Moran, but she was most happy alone with Slim on the "ranch." Rare moments of complaint and loneliness crept in only when she was truly alone. Visits to town or the outside world held no appeal, unless her husband went and left her behind. Only then would she grouse: "I'm a permanent fixture here" or "I'm beginning to think I'm glued to this place."¹⁴

In some respects the Lawrences' life, well into the 1930's, approximated a nineteenth century "frontier" life more than a twentieth century "modern" one. They gathered supplies over the autumn months and then settled in for the duration of the winter, isolated until the early spring. Heavy snow and inadequate road clearings meant they would not go into town for five or six months. For instance, between November 10, 1931, and May 16, 1932, a six-month stretch, they did not

⁷ Diem, et. al., 57-70. Cecil Lawrence was born in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1899. His father visited Jackson Hole in 1876, looking for game to feed railroad workers, and undoubtedly regaled his son with stories of the place. Sidney Lawrence also introduced his son to guns, trapping, horses and dogs when the former worked on a ranch near the Colorado/Wyoming border. After his father died in 1912, Slim visited Jackson Hole and Yellowstone National Park for the first time, in the company of family friends. His party camped on the John Sargent property. After stints in the Navy during World War I and working with the Yellowstone Sheep Company out of Lander and Riverton, he landed a job driving for the Lander-Yellowstone Transportation Company which brought him to Jackson Hole and into Verba's orbit.

⁸ Garceau, 72.

⁹ Diem, et. al., 70.

¹⁰ For more information on William Johnson, see Diem, et. al., 33-44.

¹¹ For an analysis of the history of tourism and the "second home" phenomenon in Jackson Hole see Hal K. Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 131-135. Rothman makes the case that writer Owen Wister was among the first to inaugurate a seasonal migration of wealthy people, who eventually became second-home owners, when he first visited the region in 1887 and eventually built his own cabin along the Snake River. Ray Hamilton and John Sargent, who built the first domicile, a ten-room cabin, on the Sargent/Johnson/Berol property, do not represent the same phenomenon because they intended their place as a permanent, rather than second, home.

¹² Diem, et al, 33-39.

¹³ January 18, 1934.

¹⁴ November 5, 1931, and August 17, 1943.



Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum collection

Lawrence enjoyed many outdoor sports

once go to Jackson, a distance of approximately twenty-five miles. William Johnson provided some luxuries such as a telephone in 1930, part of the Bureau of Reclamation line from Jackson Lake Dam, and a 700-watt Kohler gasoline engine generated electricity for the place. But running water was another matter. From December until mid-April, Lawrence shut off the water system to prevent freezing pipes. Thereafter, on wash days, Slim cut holes in the ice and carried pails of water from Jackson Lake up to the house. When it was time for a bath, the couple resorted to a galvanized wash tub until the spring thaw.¹⁵

Consequently, their marriage and their work represented a partnership, not uncommon among contemporary ranch families in Wyoming.¹⁶ While most rural men and women understood and accepted gender-based divisions of labor with men managing the outside "heavy" work and women taking up the domestic, household chores, circumstances often required all family members to pitch in and do whatever was necessary to make the ranch successful. Consequently, gender crossovers — particularly women engaging in "men's" work — were not uncommon. However, historian Garceau explains that women did not particularly seek out "transgression of gender boundaries" and even un-

derplayed its significance by insisting that family and ranch demands required such expanded duties. In other words, rural Wyoming women neither sought out nor celebrated role change but rather "approached [it] conservatively."¹⁷ Although the Lawrences did not run a ranch, their isolation and self-sufficiency for months at a time mirrored at least some aspects of that life. To be sure, Slim took on the heavy outside work and Verba looked after the cooking, cleaning and washday chores. Yet each helped the other, whenever necessary, and Verba's outdoors-orientation meant her mental health required getting out of their home whenever possible and whatever the weather. Such blurring of gender lines carried no political implications for the Lawrences, it simply reflected the nature of their work and their temperaments.

Further, when it came to their fur trapping activities, Slim and Verba clearly worked as partners. Slim's introduction to small animal trapping derived from his father's tutelage in southeastern Wyoming. Once ensconced on the Johnson place, he received a Wyoming Game and Fish Commission permit to trap the nearby Arizona Creek drainage. Slim and Verba set two traplines, a total of about 150 traps, and checked their lines several times a week. Each check required approximately a ten mile roundtrip. Although Verba knew nothing of trapping before her marriage, she became an enthusiast and sometimes worked the traplines alone, using horses, snowshoes or skis — depending on weather and snow depth — to reach them.¹⁸

Trapping provided cash, something in relatively short supply, particularly during the Depression. The Lawrences averaged between \$1000 and \$1500 every year from their pelts and between 1931 and 1950 they harvested 101 coyotes, 63 weasels, 1 lynx, 8 minks, 217 pine martins, 5 red foxes, and one skunk.¹⁹ In the early years the Lawrences evinced no sentimentality regarding the animals. In fact, Verba reported in 1933, "A red letter day for Cecil, he caught the red fox that has been running around here for years."²⁰ Only later in life, did Cecil admit his appetite for killing these animals had greatly diminished. Verba never let sentimentality interfere and as late as 1949 she regretted springing a trap and turning a beautiful red fox loose.²¹

¹⁵ Diem, et al, 40-41, 70-71

¹⁶ For an analysis of gender dynamics in early twentieth century Wyoming ranch families, see Garceau, 89-111.

¹⁷ Garceau, 89.

¹⁸ Diem, 76

¹⁹ Diem, 78.

²⁰ December 29, 1933.

²¹ December 10, 1949. She did not indicate the reason for doing this.

The Lawrences must have perceived the proceeds from pelts as a crucial element of their financial situation. Surely the cash helped them weather the Depression. Otherwise, that great economic calamity seemingly had no impact on them. In fact, many aspects of their lives seemed blissfully removed from the broader world's potential slings and arrows as they surrendered to the natural rhythms of northwest Wyoming. A cyclical pattern dictated Verba's days during the 1930's: starting with the fall hunting season, followed by the long, long winter months, a brief spring, and a hectic summer. Usually in September the Lawrences began stocking up on food to last for months, storing the more perishable items in a basement and using Jackson Lake ice to keep it cool. Slim purchased the winter supply of gasoline and Verba began canning. October brought big game hunting. Slim provided Verba with various firearms, including a .22 as a Christmas present in 1931. Initially, she claimed, "As a 'gunma' I'm not so good. I shot things up today, shot a hole thru the wall."²² Her shooting eventually improved. Each harvested an elk every year. They also hunted moose and waterfowl and, of course, Verba loved fishing. By November Slim drained the water to the kitchen to prevent bursting pipes. The Lawrences passed the time, over the winter, completing day-to-day chores, checking the traps, dog sledding, hunting archaeological and historical artifacts around the property, and ice fishing.²³ Larger animals

offered the most excitement. In the early thirties, particularly, Verba's diaries noted more sightings of animals than people. Sometimes the encounters proved dangerous and conflicts with moose and bear, in particular, usually ended up with one fewer animal around.²⁴

In April the lake's ice would begin to break. Others signs of spring included returning bluebirds, seagulls, and the unmistakable call of the reappearing sandhill cranes. "The air is ringing with the cries of sandhills," she wrote one late April day.²⁵ April also meant taking

²² December 6, 1931

²³ Eventually the Lawrences' archeological and historical artifact and photograph collections became the foundation for the Jackson Hole Museum which Slim and fellow Jackson Holer Homer Richards founded in 1958. Slim's historical interests led him to serve two terms on the Wyoming State Historical Advisory Board. He was also a charter member of the Wyoming State Historical Society. The WSHS eventually honored Lawrence and Richards for creating the Jackson Hole Museum which remains open to the present. Diem, 82, 85.

²⁴ For example on May 14, 1934, Verba wrote, "A red letter day for Cecil and Cap [their dog]. They mixed with 3 grizzly bears as a result one bear's stretched out in the boathouse. Cecil owes his life to Cap." September 20, 1935, she recorded, "The fun started when Cap treed a black bear. 9 P.M. Cecil made a good shot." She spent the next morning frying bear grease. Verba killed some bears herself, including one on May 17, 1941: "killed my bear at 5:20, nice brown, shot him through the heart. Was I ever excited."

²⁵ April 24, 1946.



Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum collection

Verba Lawrence shoveling snow from roof of house, Jackson Hole.

a bath in a real bathtub, "a big moment in the life of a Jackson Holer" and mid-May brought a return to town. On May 20, 1933, Verba recorded, undoubtedly with tongue in cheek, "Resting after my trip to the city."²⁶

During these early years of caretaking, Verba lived a life of nearly complete autonomy and contentment. After completing her indoor chores she was free to do what she wanted: join Slim in outside activities, snowshoe or ski to Moran for the mail, or gaze at the beautiful Tetons across Jackson Lake. Of course the Johnson fortune made such a life possible for a property-less woman like Verba Lawrence. And the Johnsons proved quite undemanding employees. In fact, Mrs. Johnson died in 1930 and William Johnson succumbed in 1931. For the next five years, while the executor of the Johnson estate retained the Lawrences as caretakers, they had the place virtually to themselves, keeping up the property but otherwise answering to no one.²⁷

All that changed in 1936 when Alfred and Madeleine Berolzheimer, wealthy Easterners whose fortune derived from the Eagle Pencil manufacturing firm, purchased the Johnson place for a little over \$24,000.²⁸ On July 7, 1936, Verba wrote in her diary: "Mr. Berolzheimer wires that he has title to the place." And then she added, somewhat ominously, "that means get busy." One week later, Berolzheimer's carpenters appeared. "I don't like so many people around," Verba complained. Several weeks after that the new proprietors arrived. "Washday," she reported, "I'm the laundress, just one of the hired help."²⁹ Of course, she had *always* been "hired help." But six years of virtual independence and little interference undoubtedly made this new change of ownership difficult to take. Moreover, the Berols, as they preferred to be called and to which they changed their name during World War II, began planning a gigantic, new house which, in time, meant more work: many more windows to wash, many more guests to look after, and many more people to serve at dinner.³⁰ In fact, Verba began referring to the Berols' place as the "big house." Whether she intended the allusion to a slave's master's home, remains uncertain. By August 1936 she was writing in her diary: "I'm so tired just from so many around.. seemed good to be away from the place..." and then added, "I never used to say such things."³¹

The Berols did not take form as people, let alone friends, in Verba's account. Their personalities, interests and even tastes remain unrecorded. They represented, quite simply, the employer. In diary entries, Verba often referred to them with the impersonal "they," and, of course, never by their first names. Alfred and his wife Madeleine came from a different world; one

of privilege, wealth and class distinction. The Berols treated the Lawrences with the respect due any long-term, reliable employees, but the lines between employer and employee were clearly drawn and neither family evinced much interest in crossing them except for an occasional horseback ride together. Of course, Verba never articulated, directly, an awareness of class distinction. Yet her feelings came through in oblique entries such as those about the relationship between the Berol's dog and hers: "Socks really hasn't any love for French Poodles. Can't blame him.. .Poor Zip and Jerry have to be chained up because they might tear the Poodle to ribbons." The next day she went riding and admitted, "it is good to get away from the place."³²

Without a doubt, the Berol's presence, which usually lasted about two and one-half months out of every year (late July to early October), disrupted Verba's normal routine and enjoyment of the exquisite property. The Berols, from all appearances, were generous employers but also demanding — at least while they were in residence. They loved to entertain and expected Verba to supervise the dinners and even serve the guests which, on one occasion, included Jackson Hole dude ranchers and writers Struthers and Katharine Burt. Other guests included labor leader John L. Lewis, who Verba thought looked like a bull, and publisher Alfred Knopf.³³ She was, of course, not invited to join them at the table. Verba's place was in the kitchen. She dreaded the work and resented the implications. One August day, while preparing dinner for 25, she thought "oh! for a good old snowstorm."³⁴ Another day she confided to her diary, "The B's arrived about 5:30, it was nice while they were away." On yet another occasion, she confided, "[I] will be glad when the B's leave so we can do something."³⁵

²⁶ April 25, 1932 and May 20, 1933.

²⁷ On December 9, 1931, Verba noted they received word of Mr. Johnson's death and added, "We loved him very much, this is truly one of our saddest day (sic)." Friends interred William and Mae Johnsons' ashes on their Jackson Hole property. Every Memorial Day thereafter, Verba Lawrence placed flowers on the grave.

²⁸ Diem, et. al., 45-7.

²⁹ July 9, 1936 and July 27, 1936.

³⁰ For information on the Berol name change see Diem, et. al., 46. For other examples of Verba's reactions to the new owners and their more demanding work load see July 22, 1938 and July 30, 1938.

³¹ August 18, 1936.

³² August 24, 25, and 26, 1939.

³³ For Verba's comment on Lewis, see August 24, 1939. For more on the Berols' entertaining at the AMK, see Diem, et al, 52-53.

³⁴ August 10, 1941.

³⁵ September 27, 1937, and October 3, 1945.

Eventually the Berols *would* leave, usually around October, and Slim and Verba would reclaim the "ranch" as their own. This was, as Verba put it, "my country." Of course, it was not theirs, at least not legally. They occasionally looked into purchasing some land of their own, but it would have been impossible to match the spectacular location and setting of the AMK and they lacked the financial wherewithal to buy a more modest version anyway.³⁶ The Lawrences never did purchase property. Instead, as the years passed, they simply grew more accustomed to the hectic routines attached to the Berol's stays and then heaved a sigh of relief when their "masters" returned East.

The Lawrence-Berol relationship is instructive for what it reveals about the interplay between "natives" (year-round residents) and "neo-natives" (wealthy, seasonal residents) of Jackson Hole in the early decades of the twentieth century. The latter, according to historian Hal Rothman, approximated the natives in dress and activity during lengthy visits to the valley, but they brought a level of sophistication and worldliness the locals lacked. Further, they neither endured northwest Wyoming's hard winters nor depended upon it for their economic well-being. Natives, on the other hand, could not escape Jackson Hole's "environmental and economic constraints," and so, Rothman concludes, "If the locals resented the stream of visitors that grew into a river, it would be hard to blame them."³⁷ A measure of this pertains to Verba's state of mind. She was resentful. Yet she did not covet the Berols' wealth and economic independence; she simply disliked the demands such wealth put upon her and its power to limit her freedom to enjoy Jackson Hole to its fullest during the summer months. And she did not dread the winter weather; she welcomed it! For once the Berols departed and winter set in, Slim and Verba regained control of the property, their time, and their lives. As Rothman himself acknowledges, at least through the 1950's, natives "endured the summer and the profits it brought to rediscover the essence of their town and themselves."³⁸ That, in a nutshell, describes the Lawrences.

Still, there was no denying change was in the air. By the early 1940's increased road plowing and development of mechanized oversnow vehicles diminished the Lawrence's winter isolation. Verba and Slim drove into town more often, and by the years following World War II, Verba began complaining about traffic, crowds and the difficulty of finding a parking place on a summer's day. Not all changes were regrettable, though. She enjoyed going to the movies and skiing on Snow King, the town hill, where locals constructed a rope tow in the late 1930's.³⁹



Slim Lawrence and the Berols

More and more people from the outside world discovered Jackson Hole. Simultaneously, Verba's contacts with that world increased exponentially. Radio brought the world's news to her cabin and in 1939 she carefully tracked the German invasion of Poland, Italy's alliance with Germany, and the English and French declaration of war on Germany. On December 7, 1941, the Lawrences returned from "a quiet, beautiful day on Two-goo-tee (sic) [Towgottee Pass] to learn.. that Japan had declared war on us."⁴⁰ For the duration, Verba paid particularly close attention to the war's Pacific theater and on December 7, 1944, recorded: "Hope before another Dec. 7th comes that we have beat the Japs into the earth for the.. sneak deal." Not above using common, derogatory terms for the Asian enemy, she admitted she had difficulty conceiving of the Japanese as human.⁴¹ Verba did not mention rationing or

³⁶ Slim Lawrence apparently tried to purchase the Sargent ranch before William Johnson did buy it. See Diem, et al, 57.

³⁷ Rothman, 134-135.

³⁸ Ibid., 279.

³⁹ Among the movies Verba noted seeing were "Shane" and "Spencer's Mountain," both filmed in Jackson Hole.

⁴⁰ December 7, 1941.

⁴¹ January 26, 1944.

indicate which local men went off to fight. But on November 11, 1945, the Lawrence enjoyed Armistice Day and expressed gratitude that "so many of the Moran boys were home."⁴² Over the years, Verba's interest in the outside world continued as she jotted down fleeting thoughts on the Cold War, arrival of television in Jackson Hole, space travel, President John F. Kennedy's assassination, the war in Vietnam, and the presence of "hippies" on the Berol property.⁴³

In 1954 Verba Lawrence decided to take another job, off the AMK, although her reason for doing so remains unrecorded. Slim's back problems, which required hospitalization at the Mayo Clinic, may have been a factor. She became the Moran postmaster, a position she held until her retirement in 1967. This new responsibility also altered the Lawrences' lives. For one thing, they no longer wintered on the AMK, living instead at Moran or the Jackson Lake Lodge. The couple acquired a television. They also began yearly jaunts out of Jackson Hole altogether, visiting the Southwestern states or Las Vegas for a month in the winter or early spring. Meanwhile life in Jackson Hole was changing considerably. More and more tourists clogged the roads and rendered the town even less attractive. Even such notables as President John F. Kennedy and Lady Bird Johnson were visiting Jackson Hole by the 1960's.

When Verba retired as postmaster she and Slim began plans to build a home of their own. Alfred Berol deeded them one acre of his property and allowed them to build a house on the AMK, presumably in gratitude for their long and loyal service to his family and in recognition of the Lawrences' deep connection to the place. In the spring of 1968, Verba and Slim spent their spare time clearing brush and trees at the homesite and by fall carpenters had completed the house. Verba never enjoyed it, however. She suffered a stroke before its completion and although she took up residence in the home, her health deteriorated. Over the many years of diary-keeping, Verba had noted deaths by suicide. In the end, she chose that option for herself. On July 8, 1970, Verba Lawrence shot herself, apparently finding her slow, agonizing decline, no longer bearable. A bereaving Slim buried her on a hilltop, overlooking her beloved Tetons.

For much of her adult life in Jackson Hole, Verba Lawrence enjoyed incredible freedom - a freedom made possible, ironically, by the economic infusion of outsiders' wealth into the valley. In some respects, Verba's choices were limited. She lacked education, drive, and capital. What she did have was the good fortune to find her way into Jackson Hole, a place whose magnificent landscapes attracted the wealthy. Her livelihood de-

pended upon people who could afford to hire caretakers and make life in such a special spot possible for someone who could never afford it otherwise. The landscape attracted the upper class and they, in turn, offered work. For only a few months out of every year did Verba have to actually cope with this fact: only when the Berols arrived was she reminded of her status as "hired hand;" only momentarily did she feel, almost viscerally, the economic reality and class stratification that have long been a part of Jackson Hole's history.

Through it all, Verba Lawrence embraced the most traditional woman's role: helpmate of husband. Here again, she had the good luck to meet and marry a partner who shared her love of the outdoors, provided an outlet for her interest in sports, and encouraged her to partake of them wholeheartedly. A more constrained, domestic setting and a more conventional marriage would have made her, as she put it, "hard to live with" — in short, a very unhappy woman. It was the combination of her husband, their relationship, the spectacular landscape, and the employment opportunities wealthy people provided, that allowed a working-class person such as Verba an uncommon opportunity to experience the best kind of life Jackson Hole had to offer. If the trade-off was a "devil's bargain," as historian Rothman characterizes such relationships between locals and wealthy neobornatives, Verba Lawrence had few objections. Her only complaint: time passed too quickly.

⁴² November 11, 1945.

⁴³ The latter did not appeal to Verba who chased them off. See May 21, 1968, for an example.

*Sherry L. Smith is an Associate Professor of History at Southern Methodist University and seasonal resident of Jackson Hole. She is the author of *Reimagining Indians, 1880-1940* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming), as well as *Sagebrush Soldier* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), which chronicles her great-grandfather's army experience on Wyoming's Bozeman Trail and in the Dull Knife Battle in 1876. Smith also has published a number of articles on Western women's history.*

Recent Acquisitions in the Hebard Collection, UW Libraries

Compiled by Tamsen L. Hert, University of Wyoming Libraries

Davis, Verna Burger. *My Chosen Trails: A Wyoming Woman's Recollections Through the Twentieth Century*. Golden, CO: Deep Creek Press, 1998. Hebard & Coe CT 275 .D2846 A3 1998

Evans, Timothy H. *King of the Western Saddle: The Sheridan Saddle and the Art of Don King*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1998. Hebard & Science TS 1032 .E93 1998

Everhart, Bill. *Take Down Flag & Feed Horses*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998. Hebard & Coe F 722 .E92 1998

Fox, Wesley. *Union Pacific, Cheyenne West, Part 1*. Cheyenne, 1996. Hebard & Science TF 25 .U5 F669 1996

Garceau, Dee. *The Important Things of Life: Women, Work and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880-1929*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997. Hebard & Coe F 767 .S9 G36 1997

Inada, Lawson Fusao. *Drawing the Line, Poems*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 1997. Hebard & Coe PS 3559 .N3 D73 1997
Concerns the "draft" resisters at Heart Mountain.

Japanese-American Relocation Reviewed. Berkeley: Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1976. Hebard D 769.8 .A6 J363 1976 v.1-2

McCoy, Michael. *Journey to the Northern Rockies*. Old Saybrook, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 1998. Hebard & CoeRef F 721 .M45 1998

McDermott, John D. *Frontier Crossroads: the History of Fort Caspar and the Upper Platte Crossing*. Casper, WY: City of Casper, 1997. Hebard F 761 .M2 1997

McNamee, Thomas. *The Return of the Wolf to Yellowstone*. NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1997. Hebard & Science QL 737 .C22 M393 1997

McWilliams, Esther. *The Beauty of the Bighorns*. Woodburn, OR: Beautiful America Publishing Company, 1998. Hebard & Science QH 105 .W8 M38 1998

Miller, David. L. (comp.) *Hans "Peppi" Teichner*. Ashland, OR: David L. Miller, 1997-98. 2 vols. Hebard & Coe GV 854.2 .T44 H367 1997 v.1-2

Pellatz, Karla Steinle. *Tastes & Tours of Wyoming*. Casper: Wyoming Homestay and Outdoor Adventures, 1997. Hebard & Sci TX 715 .P386 1997

Peace & Change. Special Forum Issue: Relocation of Japanese Americans During World War II: The Heart Mountain Experience. Sonoma, CA: California State College, 1998. Hebard JX 1901 .P248 v. 23, no. 2, April 1998

Reckling, Frederick W. & JoAnn B. *Samuel Howell "Doc" Knight: Mr. Wyoming University*. Laramie, WY: University of Wyoming Alumni Association, 1998. Hebard & Geology QE 22 .K64 R425 1998

Ryder, Lyn. *Road Ranches Along the Oregon Trail 1858 to 1868: Between Marysville, Kansas and Fort Kearny, Nebraska*. Niwot, CO: Prairie Lark Publications, 1995. Hebard & Coe F 597 .R975 1995

Schubert, Frank N. *Outpost of the Sioux Wars: A History of Fort Robinson*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993. Hebard & Coe F 674 .F7 S35 1995

Shannon, Donald H. *The Utter Disaster On the Oregon Trail*. Caldwell, ID: Snake Country Publishing, 1993. Hebard & Coe F 746 .S536 193

Wadsworth, Nelson B. *Set in Stone, Fixed in Glass: the Mormons, the West, and Their Photographers*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996. Hebard NA 5235 .S23 W32 1996

White, William W. *The Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails by Air: A Pilot's Guide to the Immigrant Trails*. North Logan, UT: Western Airtrails, 1997. Hebard & Coe F 591 .W553 1997

Readers can access the Hebard HomePage at:
<http://www.uwyo.edu/lib/heb.htm>.

Recent Additions and Processed Collections

Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources

Wyoming State Archives

Compiled by Curtis Greubel, Research Supervisor

Non-Government Acquisitions

Wyoming Mining Association

Various publications and papers, 1969-1999.

Wyoming School Board Association

Newsletters, 1994-1999.

Wyoming Extension Homemakers Council/Wyoming Association for Family and Community Education

Additions to collection dating from 1931 to 1997.

William Dubois

Cost data book for buildings designed by Dubois, c. 1908-37.

Wyoming Republican Party

Campaign literature, 1986, 1994.

Wyoming State Government

State Planning Coordinator

Records to 1987.

Department of Commerce, Cultural Resources Division

Administration records to 1993.

Wyoming State Auditor

Correspondence, additions from 1871-1997, and publications.

Wyoming Attorney-General's Office

Photographs of past attorneys-general from 1890-1970.

Processing of the records of Gov. Ed Herschler's three terms should be completed by the fall of 1999.

Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

From the Old Northwest to the Pacific Northwest: the 1853 Oregon Trail Diaries of Patterson Fletcher Luark and Michael Fleenen Luark. Edited by Howard Jablon and Kenneth R. Elkins. *Independence, MO: Oregon-California Trails Association, 1998. xvi - 215 pages. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendices, bibliography, indexes. Cloth, \$27.95; paper, \$14.95.*

Brothers Michael and Patterson Luark set off from Illinois to travel to Oregon in the spring of 1853. Patterson took with him his wife, Mary, their three children and his son from a previous marriage. Michael left his family behind. Both brothers kept diaries about their journey, although Patterson's apparently exists now only on microfilm.

The Luarks followed the common Oregon trail route through Kansas to the south side of the Platte River in Nebraska. Near Fort Kearny they joined a number of other emigrants to cross the river and thereafter they kept to the north side route. They followed the Sublette Cutoff to Idaho and the Snake River route to Oregon. At the Columbia River the brothers parted company, Michael traveling the remainder of the distance by water and Patterson going by land.

Of the two diaries, Michael's is the more detailed. To the modern reader the great weakness of Oregon Trail diaries is the concentration on the availability of wood, water and grass to the neglect of the surrounding human drama. Michael's diary has its share of this bias along with an almost tedious description of the exact route of travel. It was Michael's intention that a family friend should follow him, bringing his family the next year; and it seems probable that his diary was intended to be a guidebook for them. This did not happen, but for anyone interested in tracing exact trail routes, Michael's diary is a wonderful tool.

The year 1853 was a quite one on the trail. The Luarks did not encounter any Indian troubles, and it was not a major cholera year. Patterson Luark planned carefully and well, and he was lucky. He did not bury any family members on the road. There was one moment of high tension when a member of Patterson's trail was killed, quite unnecessarily, by a member of another train. There were no repercussions. No one was willing or

able to enforce punishment for the incident. Those who study the experiences of children on the trail will be interested to read that Patterson's fourteen year old son, Marcellus, deserted the train after the wagons had crossed South Pass, apparently intending to go back to Illinois. He was taken in by a train some distance behind and a few days later, his father road back to get him. Altogether the Luark diaries describe a reasonably typical, fairly undramatic crossing which probably reflected the experiences of thousands of other trail travelers.

From the Old Northwest to the Pacific Northwest is part of the Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series under the general editorship of Susan Badger Doyle. The book is illustrated by many excellent maps showing the Luark's route and the various other routes which they might have taken. Extensive footnotes amount almost to a third diary of the route a modern traveler would take to retrace, as nearly as possible, their steps. Occasionally, the editors intrude to tell the reader again what Michael or Patterson have already said, but in general their extensive knowledge of trail migration is an aid to put the Luarks' diaries in context.

The Michael Luark Papers and the microfilm copy of Patterson Luark's diary are housed at the University of Washington, Seattle. The publication of such documents is a great aid to researchers and is probably the only opportunity for schoolchildren and casual readers to access such records. The Emigrant Trails Historical Studies Series is, on this account, a most worthwhile project.

D. C. Thompson
American Heritage Center
University of Wyoming

Americans View Their Dust Bowl Experience. Edited by John R. Wunder, Frances W. Kaye and Vernon Carstensen. *Niwot: The University Press of Colorado, 1999. xvi + 429 pages. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. Cloth, \$34.95.*

The editors of *Americans View Their Dust Bowl Experience* claim a twofold goal for their book: to let Americans speak for themselves about the Dust Bowl and to provide a "dynamic story" for use in secondary

and higher education (p. xi). They seek to "foster an understanding of the physical and mental dimensions of the disaster" so that another such calamity will not occur (p. 3). Approximately one-third of the book consists of primary documents. The other two-thirds contain academic analyses.

The editors divide the text into five parts. John Wunder, former director of the University of Nebraska's Center for Great Plains Studies, introduces the work in the first part and his mentor, the late Vernon Carstensen, offers a collection of primary documents in the second part. Wunder describes Dust Bowl resident reactions to relief efforts ranging from the Farm Holiday movement with its protest marches and penny auctions to cooperation with New Deal bureaucrats. The primary sources, about half of them derived from *New York Times* articles and the other half from contemporary magazines, provide first-hand accounts about the Dust Bowl. Carstensen's collection conveys the feelings of anger and desperation that translated into organized protest, despondency toward the dust and a fascination with rainmaking.

Frances Kaye, former editor of *Great Plains Quarterly*, coordinates the rest of the text's selections which largely consist of professional journal article reprints. The third part describes societal responses and institutional activism stimulated by the Dust Bowl. One particularly insightful essay by Dorothy Schwieder and Deborah Fink explains how women cut costs by enhanced home production ranging from the weaving of rugs to the butchering of meat. Most of the section's articles analyze the Farm Holiday movement in the Dakotas and Nebraska. The fourth part delivers two selections which portray the liberal media's comment on the Dust Bowl including a communist newspaper in Plentywood, Montana and Pare Lorentz's video documentary "The Plow that Broke the Plains." The final part yields historical overviews best exemplified by Donald Worster's "The Dirty Thirties: A Study in

Agricultural Capitalism." Harry McDean's "Dust Bowl Historiography," first printed in 1986, completes the volume.

Two common threads that run through the book are a broad geographic interpretation of the Dust Bowl and that "desperate times lead to desperate measures." Approximately half the articles discuss states outside the traditional Dust Bowl of the southern plains. The unlawful actions of the Farm Holiday protestors demonstrate a radicalization of a traditionally conservative area. Still, as conditions improved, conservatism and lawfulness prevailed over the forces for change. These transformations varied by sub-region, i.e., the Farm Holiday movement of South Dakota proved significantly weaker than that of more liberal North Dakota.

Ultimately, the editors succeed in their goals of providing primary source material and a repository of academic analyses to illustrate the Dust Bowl experience. The book encapsulates the contents of larger primary source collections or monographs. However, the analyses do not rival the classic monographs of Paul Bonnifield, *The Dust Bowl: Men, Dirt and Depression* (1979), R. Douglas Hurt, *The Dust Bowl: An Agricultural and Social History* (1981) or Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979). These titles appear in the very useful select and modern bibliographies given in the book. Although the editors could have strengthened this work with a conclusion explaining how their selections enhance Dust Bowl study and/or synthesizing some of the contributors' arguments, this book occupies an important niche in the study of American History.

Scholars and educators who want a somewhat eclectic reference tool or reader on the Dust Bowl will want to put this work on their shelves or in their classes.

Ken Zontek
University of Idaho

IMPORTANT ADDRESS NOTICE

Society Coordinator Judy West reminds members that, effective in October, the U. S. Postal Service will be requiring that the following address be used on all correspondence concerning Annals mailing and membership information. Mail addressed in any other form will not be delivered after Oct. 31, 1999.

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Wyoming Pictures



Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources

Aviator Amelia Earhart had flown into Cheyenne just before this picture was shot by legendary Wyoming Eagle photographer Francis Brammer. According to Brammer's later recollections, the photography was delayed because the famous flyer suffered a bout of air sickness prior to arrival and, for the first half hour

after landing, she laid in a crawl space under an airport building in order to recover. Pictured with Earhart are (from left): Leo Herman, commander at Fort Russell; Miss Frontier of 1932 Edith Gogerty (later Mrs. S. T. Stevens); and Cheyenne Mayor J. F. Weybrecht.

Join the Wyoming State Historical Society.... and your local historical society chapter

The Wyoming State Historical Society is a confederation of more than 20 local chapters located in every area of the state. Members enjoy the frequent gatherings of their local groups and participate in programs and activities that preserve and interpret their communities' history. Several times each year, members from all across Wyoming come together for major events where they celebrate common historical interests.

Membership in the society is open to everyone. Member benefits include a subscription to *Annals of Wyoming: The Wyoming History Journal*, a quarterly journal devoted to broader public understanding of all aspects of Wyoming history; and *Wyoming History News*, the society's newsletter, which is published ten times each year. Membership dues also provide support for a comprehensive awards program that recognizes people who are doing something to preserve and interpret local and state history; for Wyoming History Day, which allows thousands of Wyoming students to participate in history projects and to compete at district, state and national history day events; for research grants that support the study and publication of Wyoming history; and for a variety of special projects which help preserve and interpret the state's rich history.

If you are a member of the Wyoming State Historical Society, we solicit your continued interest, involvement and support. If you are not a member, or if you know of other non-members who share an interest in Wyoming history, we urge you (and them) to join. Contact a member of your local historical society, or write to the

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Annals of **WYOMING**

The Wyoming History Journal

Autumn 1999

Vol. 71, No. 4



“War Talk, Christmas Cheer, 1924”

Oil, 28" x 38"

The cover painting was done by Wyoming's famed "cowboy artist," E. W. "Bill" Gollings.

Born in Idaho in 1878, Gollings and his family moved to Chicago when he was ten years old. He studied drawing in school there and after a series of odd jobs, he returned west in 1896. For more than five years, he rode the range as a cowhand for Montana and Wyoming cattle outfits. He continued his drawing in his spare time. Just after the turn of the century, he returned to Chicago and attended the Academy of Fine Arts.

In 1909 he built a studio in Sheridan and worked on Sheridan area ranches while he painted commercially. Gradually, his works gained favor with critics and collectors.

He died on April 16, 1932, in Sheridan.

The painting is from the Sherry Nicholas collection housed at the University of Wyoming Art Museum.

The editor of *Annals of Wyoming* welcomes manuscripts and photographs on every aspect of the history of Wyoming and the West. Appropriate for submission are unpublished, research-based articles which provide new information or which offer new interpretations of historical events. First-person accounts based on personal experience or recollections of events will be considered for use in the "Wyoming Memories" section. Historic photo essays for possible publication in "Wyoming Memories" also are welcome. Articles are reviewed and refereed by members of the journal's Editorial Advisory Board and others. Decisions regarding publication are made by the editor. Manuscripts (along with suggestions for illustrations or photographs) should be submitted on computer diskettes in a format created by one of the widely-used word processing programs along with two printed copies. Submissions and queries should be addressed to Editor, *Annals of Wyoming*, P. O. Box 4256, University Station, Laramie WY 82071.

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CAMPAIGN MEMORIES

James B. Griffith, Jr.

As I have been offered this opportunity to author a "Wyoming Memories" for the *Annals* it occurred to me that it might be desirable to write for a different reader; those who have never sought an elective office nor worked their hearts out for someone else. Those who have campaigned for themselves or become deeply involved in a political race already know what I hope my words convey. They know political campaigns and their results magnify the feelings of excitement, joy, disappointment, satisfaction, lasting friendship, bitterness, stress, worry, and humor to mention a few.

In campaigns there are nearly always many losers, and of course only one winner. With perhaps three or more opponents in a primary and statistically only half a chance of winning in the general, the odds of success are poor. Be this as it is, our democracy is fortunate that people will put their necks on the line despite the odds, for they provide the heart and keep the blood of democracy flowing.

It must be an inherited trait but family groups seem to have a tendency to follow the same general interest. In my family there seems to exist a desire to participate in various levels of political activity.

In Wyoming that desire likely started with my maternal grandfather, Harry C. Snyder, who arrived in

Wyoming behind some 3,000 head of Mexican cattle which had been driven all the way from Matagorda Bay, Mexico. Another cowboy on that 1879 drive was John B. Kendrick, who was to become a Wyoming governor and U.S. Senator. Both were loyal Democrats. Harry Snyder became a rancher in what is now Niobrara County and later was owner and operator of the H. C. Snyder and Company, a mercantile company in Lusk which sold hardware, clothing, furniture, groceries, etc., and did it all on credit. When the ranchers sold their livestock and paid their annual bill they would be rewarded with a new hat.

Mr. Snyder was a pioneer mayor of Lusk and seemed to have a special interest in education, which was probably partly because he married Mary Vincent, a teacher who worked at various locations along the Cheyenne-Deadwood Stage Line. She may well have been the first college educated teacher north of Fort Laramie.

During the homesteading era when ranchers and homesteaders were not friends, he served on the school board. In his book *Hat Creek and Hard Times*, Dr. Edward C. Bryant, a leading American statistician, writes, "In the spring of 1913 my parents and others increased the pressure on the school board for a community school. H. C. Snyder tried to resign from the

board because he was embarrassed they wouldn't fund schools for the homesteaders. His resignation wasn't accepted and the board voted to build a school along the Hat Creek road..."

He served one term in the Legislature as a Representative from Converse County and was chairman of a committee to break off the eastern portion of Converse into a new county. In Mae Urbanek's book *Wyoming Place Names*, she gives Snyder credit for the name Niobrara. In 1916 he was a candidate for the State Senate but withdrew because of ill health and died before the election. That was the Democratic side of the family.

The Republican side started when my Dad, with perhaps a fifth grade education, learned the printing business in Lexington, Kentucky. Later he worked his way west after serving in numerous capacities at a number of newspapers. He was also a member of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and in 1909 was an official at a national convention under the famous labor leader Samuel Gompers. He described his family as strong Lincoln Republicans. While writing for the *Natrona County Tribune* he took a turn at politics and was elected a Natrona County Commissioner. He only served one term.

My mother and father were widow and widower when they became acquainted during the Wyoming Press Association conventions. Mother was a feminine pioneer for women were rarely publishers and editors, and she was both at *The Lusk Herald*. They were married on Easter 1926. Before long they set out on yet another newspaper venture, as they and the J. E. Hanways of Casper went to Laredo, Texas where they published *The Laredo Times*, which was a daily paper with one issue in English and another in Spanish. It was during this experience that I came into the world. When I was but 31 days old the family, then consisting of yours, mine and ours, moved to Lusk. I guess the bilingual operation didn't work out. Never in my life did I call attention to the fact that by birth I was a Texan I just ignored it and let Wyoming people assume I was a Wyoming native.

Then came the depression and the Snyder ranch was sold to save the store, but with its credit program it also went down. I do believe I remember the election night of 1932; but than again maybe it was just because I had been told about it. The returns were posted in the vacant Snyder store. Dad was running for the Legislature and like all Republicans during the Hoover depression he was badly beaten. He never ran for elective office again.

Of course 1934 was again an all Democratic year, and then came 1936 and one of Dad's best friends, Frank A. Barrett, Lusk lawyer, was running for Congress. Barrett's son Jim, now Judge of the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, accompanied his dad on much of the campaign putting up posters and handing out brochures. Barretts often campaigned with Senator Robert Carey who was running for reelection. He had previously served Wyoming as governor. Democrat Paul Greever, a Cody lawyer, was seeking his second term in Congress.

In the words of Judge Barrett: "The 1936 election was an across-the-board Democratic sweep. In my dad's case, he quickly put it behind him and buried himself in his law practice. In Senator Carey's case the defeat was devastating. He died about a year later."

After the overwhelming Democratic victories of 1932, 1934 and 1936 the Wyoming Republican party was little more than a memory. Dad always said because no one else was dumb enough to take it, he was elected Republican State Chairman in 1937. The Wyoming GOP was \$3000 in debt and in 1937 that was big money. The organization existed only on paper, and there were few creditable candidates in the wings. Even



J. B. Griffith, the author's father, was a prominent publisher and Republican Party official



American Heritage Center, UW

Frank Barrett, the only Wyomingite ever elected to all three top elective offices--the U. S. House, the Governorship and the U. S. Senate.

though the GOP future looked dark indeed, there would be an election in 1938 and the elephant would have to make an appearance if America's two party system was to exist. Dad enlisted George Houser, publisher of the *Guernsey Gazette*, and Cheyenne lawyers Harry B. Henderson and Ewing T. Kerr to serve as a sort of kitchen cabinet.

All five of Wyoming's elected officials were Democrats, both houses of the Legislature were controlled by the Democrats, both U.S. Senators were Democrats, and Wyoming's only congressman was a Democrat.

First came an all-out recruitment effort, and that was followed by what must have been an unexpected aggressive campaign. When the dust settled the nation was still firmly controlled by the Democrats, but not Wyoming. Nels Smith (R) was Governor, Mart Christensen (R) was State Treasurer and Esther Anderson (R) was Superintendent of Public Instruction, and that meant control of the State Boards. Both houses of the Legislature had GOP majorities, and Frank Horton (R) had been elected to Congress. Dad was appointed Land Commissioner, but still retained his chairman-

ship of the party. Some called him an autocrat, and the Wyoming Eagle read "GOP now means Griffith's Own Party."

World War II slowed, but did not stop, political activity. Dad needed a first rate candidate for Congress. He begged Frank Barrett to run, but Barrett still remembered 1936 and wouldn't consider a second try. On the final day for filing Dad forged "Frank A. Barrett" on a nomination petition and paid the filing fee. Barrett, who was pure Irish anyway, really got his Irish up and threatened legal action against Dad. Dad asked Frank to wait a few days and see the reaction to the announcement. He waited. Then from the Republican state headquarters in the basement of the Frontier Hotel, Dad phoned people all over the State asking them to phone, write or telegraph Barrett and tell him how pleased they were that he was running for Congress. Barrett was encouraged and decided to remain on the ticket. He won. He won again in 1944, and in 1946 and in 1948. He was elected Governor in 1950 and elected U.S. Senator in 1952. In the entire history of the United States there have been only a handful--likely fewer than a dozen elected officials--who have held these three high offices.

In 1942 Lester Hunt defeated Nels Smith for Governor partly because of Smith's reading ability. He was a non-stop reader, and just read the speeches others, like my Dad or Ewing Kerr, who was Attorney General, had written for him. He always read the whole talk, including even the inserted words, "pause for applause."

Following the change in governorship the Griffith family moved back to Lusk and *The Herald*. The Herald was now under the management of Gerald Bardo, who became Dad's partner and later my partner.

The summer of 1948 gave me a different view of politics as both Jim Barrett and I were attending the Republican National convention in Philadelphia. As our Dads were both delegates, we were designated Honorary Assistant Sergeant at Arms which meant we could get on the convention floor but didn't have a seat. This was the first ever televised convention. That fact alone meant the convention hall would be an oven, as the black and white TV required powerful arc burning lights. This year was also probably the last time the television didn't dominate national political conventions. Jim and I made our way with the delegation and met every one of the candidates. One of my most vivid memories of the convention came about at two a.m. after a long and very hot day, when the hero of the Bataan death march, General Wainwright, standing before a half empty hall gave a nomination speech for

Douglas MacArthur. Tom Dewey was nominated for the second time for president. I just didn't care much for him, but in November I did cast my first ever vote for him. Would you believe this I wanted Harold Stassen. A great many others didn't care for Dewey either, as Truman pulled the greatest upset of any presidential race.

In 1950 I had just received my degree from Wyoming U and started to work at *The Herald*. But 1950 was a thrilling year for Luskites as Frank Barrett was running for Governor. Among other things a car caravan was organized which visited Douglas, Wheatland and Cheyenne. I have my doubts if it really did much good, but it gave all of us a feeling we were really campaigning. Barrett won big and I was impressed when I witnessed my first inaugural.

In 1952 I first learned about how even small communities can play hardball politics. Nationally the Republicans were basically divided into two presidential camps—the Robert Taft supporters and the General Eisenhower troops. Because someone had asked, I was the Eisenhower county chairman. C. W. Erwin, the president and principal owner of the Lusk State Bank, which was Lusk's only bank, was making it his personal project to see that Taft would be the nominee. The late C.W. was a formidable man. It so happened that he had a perfect matching glass eye and the local joke for years was that if you wished to know which eye was the glass eye, just ask C.W. for a loan and the glass eye was the one with the kindly look. He was, however, a fine community man, outstanding school board member, and chief developer of the Niobrara Country Club.

I had done my homework and contacted most of the precinctmen and precinctwomen, but the conservatism in Niobrara was fairly strong for Taft. At any rate when the county convention was held I thought there were six Ike and four Taft delegates—but it might have been five and five. Inasmuch as Frank Barrett was now running for the U.S. Senate, his son, Jim, who was secretary-treasurer of the Niobrara Republicans, didn't want to be a delegate, but accepted the tenth or last alternate position.

The state convention was held in the Masonic Temple in downtown Casper as the location was a short walk from Casper's three major hotels. County Chairman Tom Miller called for a 10 a.m. meeting of the Niobrara delegation to be held in his room in the Gladstone Hotel so that the membership of the various committees could be elected. Tom then learned the convention would convene at ten, so he and others attempted to notify the

delegates the county meeting would be at nine. Everyone but C.W. got the word. In his own words, Jim Barrett writes:

I was called to serve in his stead because I was the only alternate delegate who could be located. So the election of committee members proceeded after I had been elected secretary of the meeting. The votes were all done by written ballots. I cast one vote for Taft and one for Eisenhower, but knew that C.W. would have cast his votes for Taft. The Eisenhower people now had a slight majority on each committee, including the important nominating committee. Just before the meeting was over there was a knock on the door and it was C.W. He had finally been located, but it was too late. Mr. Erwin declared the meeting was unconstitutional and wanted to know who had served in his place. Of course, it was me. He asked about the composition of the committees and when so informed he asked who counted the votes. Of course, it was me. Fortunately I had retained the written ballots and offered them to him. He refused to look and heatedly proclaimed that the first order of business would be a challenge as to the composition of the committees. Each of us held our breath as the convention opened, but Mr. Erwin did not pursue his challenge.

Statewide the Eisenhower efforts were not as successful as Niobrara's, for the delegation to the national convention had six for Taft, two for Eisenhower and four uncommitted. Of course, Ike went on to win the nomination and served two terms as president.

The bitterness over the Niobrara delegation hung on much like a skunk's spray clings to a long hair dog. C.W.'s temperature remained hot, and among his actions he gave his staff firm instructions to "never buy anything at *The Herald* again." Then one day he asked his head man, Max T. Bird, if he had a large manila envelope. Max found one in his desk. Still later on that day, June 10, 1952, C.W. asked for a second one. Max didn't have one so he took a short walk up Main Street and bought a 9 x 12 envelope which I believe sold for about 4 cents. After using the new envelope C.W. asked Max where he found that envelope and Max said at *The Herald*. Max later said C.W. had real fire in his good eye when he pointed at Max and said "You're fired." And he was. The June 12 issue of *The Herald* carried a front page article which read, "Max T. Bird, cashier of The Lusk State Bank for the past five years, unexpectedly resigned Tuesday. Reason for the resignation were not made available for publication." The article went on to glorify Max and all he had meant to the community.

Things were really in the soup now. Max didn't have a job and we were the cause. The obvious solution was to start a bank for Max to run. With Democrats like Roscoe Kilmer and Republicans like Dad and Andy McMaster and the help from U.S. Senator Lester Hunt (D-Wyo) and Gerry Bardo doing much of the paper work, the Stockmans National Bank was born and Max had a job. To be certain, there was a need for a second bank, but it was small town politics which ignited the flame. Dad and Andy were among the original directors. Years later it was fitting that Gerry Bardo became a director. The bank is now a Community First bank. And the election of 1952 sent Frank Barrett to the U.S. Senate.

I don't recall any effort on my behalf in the 1954 election, but in 1955 Dad resigned his position as Niobrara's Republican State Committeeman. I was elected to take his place, a position I held until 1970. Neither do I have memories of the 1956 election, but 1958 was one which is remembered with much bitterness by the Barrett family and friends even today. He was running against Democrat Gale McGee, a UW history professor, and while the campaign was generally hot, it was at the very end that could have defeated Barrett. Three days before the election Drew Pearson, a nationally syndicated columnist, wrote in his "Wash-

ington Merry Go Round" column that Barrett personally intervened with the IRS-Treasury people on behalf of former Senator E. V. Robertson against the government. Evidently the Wyoming Democratic party had been made aware such a column was going to be published. Brochures asking "Can you trust this man?" were distributed as the column was published. Similar advertisements appeared in several Wyoming papers. The story was one big lie, but the timing was such that it could not be answered. McGee won, but with only 50.8% of the vote. The column could well have made the difference. Rather than a libel suit Pearson offered a cash settlement, but that was refused, as Barrett wished to clear his name. In time a suitable retraction was published and through his son Jim the retraction column was run throughout Wyoming.

The Democratic convention in 1960 had to be a highlight for the longtime Wyoming Democratic National Committeeman Tracy McCracken for he, as chairman of the Wyoming delegation, cast the deciding votes which nominated John Kennedy for president. Of course Kennedy went on to become president in a tight win over Richard Nixon. Wyoming's popular congressman Keith Thomson was elected to the U.S. Senate, but died before he was even sworn in. Governor J.J. (Joe) Hickey, in effect, appointed himself to the Senate, a move that proved unpopular in 1962 when Simpson and Hickey had a rematch, but for the Senate. This time Simpson won. Mrs. Keith (Thyra) Thomson went on to be elected Wyoming Secretary of State, a position in which she sat comfortably for twenty-four years.

It was, however, during Hickey's senate service that he and Senator McGee worked with another man who would later come to the Wyoming political scene to influence the economic well being of the Cheyenne area. Colonel Ed Witzemberger as Air Force Liaison Officer to the Senate, helped convince Secretary of the Air Force Eugene Zuchert to have the Minuteman ICBM deployed at Fort Warren.

During 1963 Republican State Chairman John Wold asked me to head a nominating committee to find a new state chairman. The thinness of my memories fails to recall the other committee members, but we were in agreement that Stan Hathaway would be an excellent choice. Thus it was that I drove south from Lusk to Torrington and asked Stan if he would accept the nomination. I had just assumed he would, but I received a very definite "NO". After phone Conversations with the committee members it was suggested I ask Stan a second time. There was no question in my mind but what I needed some big reinforcements so I requested Harry Thorson of Newcastle, a former state chairman,



Stan Hathaway

*Ed Witzemberger*

and at the time Wyoming National committeeman, to accompany me to visit Stan once again. When I say big, Harry was of the around 300 pounds size. We did in fact make the trip and after a rather lengthy session with Stan and a reduction of his liquor supply, he finally agreed to take the nomination.

Stan ran an excellent, but futile campaign. There was no way to overcome the anti-Barry Goldwater landslide. All statewide Republican candidates lost, and for the first time since the 30's, the Democrats controlled the Wyoming House of Representatives. The Republicans had a majority of one in the State Senate. But by that time, Stan had become known throughout Wyoming and it is my belief that if he refused that chairmanship he might not have gone on to become the first person to serve two full terms as Governor of Wyoming.

Yes, Harry and I went back in 1966 to ask him to run for Governor, but we were too late, for the people of Goshen County as well as others from around the state already had him committed. He had outstanding opposition in the primary election with Joe Burke, prominent Natrona County rancher, as his principal opponent, and the articulate Casper lawyer Ernest Wilkerson,

in the general election. But the sad Republican "tears of '64 were tears of joy in '66" as the entire Republican national and state ticket won.

Meantime down in my small county of Niobrara a most unusual--perhaps even completely unique--event took place. Following the 1960 census and the legislative reapportionment, Niobrara had been combined with Converse County into a single state senate district. This was still the era of paper ballots and the requirements of just how many were to be printed and the rotation of names was exacting. The law required the county clerk to oversee the printing process. The Republican primary pitted Estelle Stacy of Douglas against Jim Thompson, a Niobrara rancher and four-term state representative. Mrs. Stacy was a most devoted Republican and not only national committeewoman but secretary of the National Republican Committee. Niobrara voters had the correct feeling that this might be the final time they could elect a state senator. The north Lusk precinct had the most Democrats, but they joined in the fight of Little Niobrara against Big Converse County and switched, even if just for the day, to vote Republican. After the limited number of white (Republican) ballots were gone, County Clerk Doris Christian gave her approval to use verified sample ballots. Soon the sample ballots had all been cast. What now? Can a legal voter be turned away for lack of ballots? At the time the statutes also required that the ballots be printed in the county's legal newspaper the week before the election. With great reluctance Mrs. Christian gave her approval to use the ballots as printed in last week's *Herald*. There were several, probably not many, ballots cast that carried a Safeway advertisement on the back. Jim carried Niobrara by an amazing 6 to 1 margin, but that effort wasn't necessary as he also carried Converse.

Jim ran again in 1970 against Democrat Rory Cross and barely won. That was the last time Niobrara had a state senator and it is not likely Niobrara will ever have another. Later Rory became a Republican and was elected as a legislator from Converse County.

I cannot set a time or a place when I decided to become a candidate for State Treasurer. No one really urged me to, but late in 1969 I gave the idea serious thought and can assure all that there is a vast space between thinking about it and actually announcing. With my good friend and former county Republican chairman, Bob Darrow, I became the first candidate to announce for any office. The announcement was made the evening of Tuesday, February 3, 1970, in the once again vacant room in the former Snyder building. It had been occupied for many years by the Midwest



Author's collection

"Torchlight Parade" in support of Griffith's nomination, Lusk, 1970

Hardware. Perhaps the template for the campaign was set that night, which was concluded with a torchlight parade.

As I was single at the time and attempting to raise three teenage daughters, they became my campaign team. The early February announcement was made so that I could attend the Lincoln Day dinners around the state as a candidate. At first we traveled only on weekends, and while I would visit the business district the daughters would leave brochures at homes. For the most part the work fell to my two youngest, Laura, 15, and Lynn, 13. Sally had her hands full preparing to graduate from high school as valedictorian and working to gain admission to Harvard.

Later I had a primary opponent, Floyd Holland, a former mayor of Cheyenne and a fine man. He, too, traveled the state, and had Dave Carmichael, Cheyenne lawyer and active Republican, travel with him. In the final month, the three Griffiths went full time. I needed a little more muscle with posters, etc., so I hired Greg Osborne, son of Keith and Mary Osborne of Cheyenne, to help. We covered an additional 25,000 miles. As I look back, I probably should have been charged with child abuse. I didn't know until after that Laura had been taking "No-Doz" pills, sometimes without water, while she drove. One day Lynn went with me in a chartered plane and we flew from Lusk to a breakfast in Cheyenne, lunch in Casper, afternoon coffee in Worland and dinner in Sheridan, and then back to Lusk. It was about a 19-hour day.

Inasmuch as I believe that a political candidate should get all his or her dirty linen out of the closet before



Griffith's 1970 primary campaign team. Daughter Sally, 17, is standing next to the candidate. Daughter Laura, 15, is seated on the left and daughter Lynn, 13, is on the right. Sally Griffith collection.

someone else finds it, I advertised that in 1950 I had been stricken with multiple sclerosis and that explained why I walked with a stagger. If nothing else in that campaign, I did acquaint a great many Wyoming people with MS.

Holland had served as Grand Master of the Wyoming Masonic Lodge and therefore had a statewide relationship. Both State Treasurer Minnie Mitchell and incumbent Everett Copenhaver quietly supported him. I did have the quiet support of Stan Hathaway. Holland's declared expenses were two and one-half times mine. I, or rather we, won by 3970 votes. I had anticipated that I would be facing Elizabeth Phelan in the general, but about 3 a.m., the returns from Uinta County came in, and Bob Adams, a perennial candidate for Treasurer, won the Democratic nomination by 532 votes.

One of the most fortunate events of my political life happened even before the general started. Colonel Ed Witzemberger, after three wars and 30 years in the Air Force, had been released and was visiting in Lusk with his in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Thompson. They lived directly across the alley from our home. Ed walked across that dirt alley and said, "Eleanor and I would like to go campaigning with you." I said, "I can't af-

ford you." He said, "We're free." We campaigned in their car, and I'm sure, often on their money.

At any rate it was a good campaign with Stan Hathaway setting the course. Even though it is almost automatic for a Republican to be elected Treasurer in Wyoming, we campaigned hard. In all of Wyoming's history there has been only one Democrat elected Treasurer — J. Kirk Baldwin in 1932. I can't explain it, but the fact is obvious.

In political life name recognition is paramount, but at times embarrassment shows. During the 1970 general Vice President Spiro Agnew came to Casper largely to campaign for Harry Roberts in his race against Teno Roncalio for Congress. In a talk at what was then the Ramada Inn in Casper, he concluded with "so I urge and ask you to vote for my friend Harry Taylor." That race was one of the closest statewide races ever—Roncalio winning by only 608 votes.

That same year Ed Herschler had been given to understand that Teno, who had previously served in Congress, would not be a candidate for the Democrat nomination, so Herschler filed. Then later, for whatever reason, Teno had decided to run. Herschler never publicly criticized Teno, probably because he knew there would be another day. Years later Herschler did, however.



Author's collection

The 1971 inauguration of Wyoming's five state elected officials. From left: Gov. Stan Hathaway, Secretary of State Thyra Thomson, State Auditor Everett T. Copenhaver, State Treasurer Jim Griffith, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Robert Schrader, Supreme Court Justice Norman B. Gray who presided at the swearing-in ceremony.



Author's collection

The author during his first campaign in 1970.

make his bitterness known to close friends. I suppose that some will be surprised to learn that I was one of them.

One evening in the '70 campaign a rally was being held in snow-covered Dubois in the building where the banquet room and bar adjoin. The local emcee had at least one too many, and when it came to introducing the governor he said, "And now it is my pleasure to introduce the finest governor Wyoming ever had, Clifford Hansen." Stan Hathaway stood up and with his usual sharpness said, "I agree with you, but my name happens to be Stan Hathaway".

Then after my election I had a name problem, for the president of the Cheyenne City Council was also named Jim Griffith. The *Laramie Boomerang* published an editorial that I should not be serving Cheyenne as well as the state. It was necessary for me to explain that my name was James B. Griffith and his middle initial was T. But then there were also other cases of confusion.

During my campaigns I tried to cover all the places regardless of size, and I firmly believe that that is the way Wyoming candidates should do. The only total wasted effort was when my wife Carolyn and I drove to Colony, Wyoming's most northeastern community. The truth is that Colony can't be driven to on a paved road without going through Montana or South Dakota. Everyone I could find lived and voted in South Dakota.

Campaigning in Jackson before the August primary is much the same problem, for most people are tourists

and the local people are just too busy. I tried to visit with people waiting in line at the bank drive-in window but even that wasn't really satisfactory.

When I first started trying to do the radio talk shows I was loaded with fear but before long, the ham in me came through and I looked forward to getting on the air whenever I could. Inasmuch as most radio types really know little about the minor elected offices, I found it very useful to furnish them with some logical questions which sounded tough, but ones that I was ready to answer. Then, too, if the show is a call-in, it is a good idea to have a few people planted around so the questions you want asked are forthcoming. During the 1974 campaign in Wheatland, Dick Jones, the Republican candidate for governor, was being interviewed, when suddenly the interviewer announced, without warning, "Now the interview will be completed by Jim Griffith." Carolyn saw my panic and started handing me notes. It went reasonably well, but afterward, Dick said, "Did you have to ask the tough questions?"

Once in Gillette I was scheduled for a few minutes, and when I showed up on time, the station manager asked, "Where is your interviewer?" Thus Carolyn became a radio interviewer.

In 1970 Vice President Spiro Agnew was having an ongoing fight with the press, and I was on a call-in show in Casper, when a lady who knew me and my press background, asked if Veep Agnew would last. I said that I thought he was able to take care of himself. Four years later from the same station and same show

the same lady again phoned and asked what I thought of Agnew now. Of course, Agnew had since resigned over a scandal which had taken place when he was governor of Maryland. I could only answer that Agnew had lost.

In mid-1973 Copenhaver resigned as State Auditor because of failing health. Gov. Stan appointed my deputy Ed Witzemberger. His only reservation was that Ed had long ago declared Lusk as his home. He did so because his wife Eleanor was a Niobrara native. Stan had no concern about Ed or his ability, but asked, "How can I justify having two Lusk guys on the boards?" It worked.

I ran unopposed in the primary for State Auditor in 1974 because the Constitution prohibited the State Treasurer from succeeding himself or herself. For years, Minnie Mitchell and Everett Copenhaver had switched offices. Thus, Ed Witzemberger ran for Treasurer. It was to be the last time that a switch was made and we were glad to end the practice. While I was unopposed in the primary and no Democratic candidate had filed for Auditor, things looked fairly good for me. But Bob Adams, who evidently just liked to campaign, received 59 write-in votes to run against me. The part of the

campaign which was most aggravating was Elizabeth Phelan running against Witzemberger. She made claims that we had been purchasing worthless bonds, which later proved to be completely unfounded but caused some concern at the time.

Following Herschler's inauguration in 1974, the four Republican elected officials got together and jokingly called ourselves "TGWS," for "Thank God Wyoming's Safe," or "Thomson, Griffith, Witzemberger and Schrader." Inasmuch as Thyra held the highest office and had served longer than we men, she considered herself the leader. As I can remember we had a single meeting. It was held in Thyra's lovely home. Thyra had some people she wanted to fire, but we didn't agree, and that was the end of "TGWS."

Political activity in the fall of 1977 was slow, so Carolyn and I decided to give the 1978 election an early start. Some 300 attended our "political happening" held in the fairgrounds auditorium in Lusk, and we had a spaghetti dinner served, a band and a Cheyenne quartet for entertainment. Everyone who thought they might be a state-wide candidate was invited to speak, but only for 87 seconds. The speakers were plentiful. It was just a fun time but there was one man who used the opportunity to give his first political talk before a Wyoming audience—Dick Cheney.

If ever there was an election won with a single sentence it was Al Simpson's first race for the U.S. Senate against Raymond Whitaker, Casper Democrat. In 1978 in a joint appearance before a packed house in Casper, Whitaker spoke at first, going on and on at great length, painting Al as the lowest form of human. He attacked his legislative record in great detail, and even took on Milward Simpson's senate service. The crowd was growing weary of the tirade, and when Al finally rose to speak he said, "Pesky fellow, isn't he?" The crowd roared, and that was the start of eighteen years of effective service.

If course, there was more than that, but Al Simpson, the tallest man ever to serve in the Senate, carried all twenty-three counties. Dick Cheney did nearly as well, and because he had more staff (sometimes I traveled alone, the rest of the time just Carolyn with me), he let his guys help me. That's the reason that my posters were placed directly above most public urinals in Wyoming.

Most campaigns become too serious until the intensity is self-defeating. At the 1978 Republican convention in Jackson, Carolyn and I, with the help of some others, staged a one-way humorous phone conversation stunt which was patterned after comedian Bob Newhart, a popular entertainer of that era. Then in 1982



Jim and Carolyn Griffith

at the Sheridan Convention we copied another popular entertainer, Johnny Carson, by bringing in "Griffith the Magnificent," complete with costumes and real live belly dancers. After being carried to the stage, I gave the answers to questions before they were asked. It, too, was a smash hit.

I was not opposed in the primary in 1978 and there were no Democrats on the ballot, but Jim Polis started a write-in campaign and, thus, won the nomination. It really wasn't much of a contest, but inasmuch as I was 51 years old, I must admit that his constant charge that I was a tired old man grew annoying. For the first time I carried all twenty-three counties and received over 69% of the vote.

The 1978 election did bring a first to the Equality State--three of the five elected officials were women. Treasurer Shirley Whittler (R) and Lynn Simons (D) Superintendent of Public Instruction, joined with Thyra Thomson (R) Secretary of State. This bothered me not at all but it did concern Governor Herschler. In fact, in his inauguration address, he said, "Thanks for Jim Griffith so I don't have an entire kitchen cabinet." The women were good officials. In all my sixteen years on the various state boards there were no, or at least none that I can remember, partisan votes. This is in direct opposition to what the Legislature displays. In fact,

when the location of the Wyoming Women's Center came before the Board of Charities and Reform, I had to get the two Democrats, Herschler and Simons, to go with me in naming Lusk as the site.

One day--I don't even remember the year--Gov Herschler phoned from his office to me, and asked if he could come visit for a few minutes. Of course he could--there is little that is more flattering than when a governor asks permission to come down and hall and visit. The fact is that he came to my office numerous times, as he knew that it was much more effort for me to make the walk between the offices than it was for him. Of course this came about because his wife, Casey, and I were both multiple sclerosis victims.

On this particular day he came with a request. He said that a group was going to hold a dinner in honor of Casey and asked if Carolyn and I would attend. It was also to be appreciated if I would sit at the head table and offer a few remarks. I accepted but said I would let them know about Carolyn later.

While I knew that it would, of course, be a Democrat show, I felt a kindredship with Casey. Many times the two of us gave each other support, particularly at cocktail parties. Alcohol increases the instability which is among the curses of MS.

Carolyn refused to attend the dinner and doubted my sanity and loyalty that I would attend and even agree to speak at what was really a Democratic fund raiser. Of course it was a fund raiser. They even charged me \$25. I can't say that I was the only Republican elected official to ever speak at a Democratic fund raiser while in office, but I never heard of another.

Bob McCracken, son of Tracy, the almost forever Democratic National Committeeman, and biggest newspaper owner in Wyoming, was emcee. As was often said during scores of years, Tracy and Dad were friendly enemies. Many years they were joint emcees at the Press Convention dinners. Bob first introduced the Governor and in turn Gov Ed introduced me--not a glowing introduction, but adequate. I had intended to just tell a bit about Tracy's and Dad's chatter through the years, offer a few words of praise about Casey, and sit down. However, during dinner I had a chance to give the two or three hundred in attendance in the combined rooms of the Hitching Post a good examination and made a decision that I needed to say more.



Casey and Ed Herschler

The author and his wife Carolyn at the time he announced his retirement from state government in 1986. Author's collection.



Never before and in all likelihood never again would I have a chance to speak to so many Democrats. After a McCracken-Griffith story and words of praise for Casey, I concluded my remarks with something that went together like this:

Friends, I'm not here under false colors - you all know that I was a Republican when I walked in the door, and I'll be a Republican when I leave. I also know that most of you are Democrats and still will be when I sit down. Of course I see in the audience a number of Republican who also happen to be state employees (looking at the Governor). I suppose that you, Governor, are also making a mental note of who is present. Now what I want to tell you is that Wyoming is unique. Both you and I have a great number of friends, which happen to belong to the other party. But in Wyoming we never let our partisanship, no matter how strong, interfere with our friendship. Thank you.

Without question I received the longest, strongest, standing ovation I ever had anywhere. The final analysis came from a completely nonpartisan magazine, *The P.E.O. Record*, which is a publication of the P.E.O. sisterhood, a women's organization devoted to education. Inasmuch as Casey was a P.E.O., they had an article on the dinner, which closed with: "Although the dinner for Casey was a Democratic event it was a Republican, State Auditor Jim Griffith, who stole the show."

The campaign of 1982 was my last, but I did not know that nor did it even cross my mind. Again, I wasn't opposed in the primary, but that isn't quite the advantage it may seem. For starters, it eliminates the possibility of raising campaign funds and, of course, you aren't able to attract the voters' attention. I and/or we traveled much of the state anyway, but it was in a leisurely manner.

By now the Republican leadership had grown tired of beating each other up in the race for Governor, so there was an unofficial agreement that there would only be one serious candidate and that it would be former speaker of the house and grandson of a former governor—Nels Smith of Crook County. Nels was on the primary campaign trail but just eight days before the last day to file when a bomb shell fell. Nels announced that "for personal and health reasons," he was withdrawing his candidacy. While there were two other Republican candidates, they were not considered serious candidates so Republican Chairman Fred Schroeder appointed a committee headed by Stan Hathaway to find another suitable candidate.

The committee of Senator Clifford Hansen, former chairman Ed Witzenburger, Harry Roberts, Tom Stroock and Charles Scott selected former speaker of the house and Casper oilman Warren Morton as the candidate. This was indeed an awkward start, and while Warren gave it a good try Herschler ended up carrying

all the counties except Campbell and Park and, thus, Wyoming had its first and only three-term governor.

The 1982 campaign ended up with a six days, three stops per day blitz. The candidates plus Al Simpson, loaded into two planes and we traveled like a flying circus. Now Simpson wasn't a candidate, but acted as the master of ceremonies, and with the aid of a timer to keep us in line and on time. Politicians being what they are, the timer became a hated device. At the last rally which was at the college in Riverton Dick Cheney and I conceived a plot. While the order in which the candidates spoke varied, I asked that I might be the last to speak, which was fine. As I rose to speak I gave a hand signal to Dick, and he picked up the timer and gave it to me and I smashed it with my cane. Al jumped up, and with the type of language for which he became famous, he described the types of low-life we two were and demanded reimbursement of \$7.95. At the next GOP state convention, Dick and I presented Al with an engraved hour glass. Actually it wasn't really an hour glass, for the sand fell through in 13 minutes. Several times in my presence, Al has described the event.

It wasn't that I was over-confident, but Carolyn and I had signed up for a trip which started on election day. I had to phone back from Cairo, Egypt, to learn if I had won. It was by far my greatest victory, for I not only topped the ticket but of the 469 Wyoming precincts, I carried 455. My Democratic opponent, Sid Kornegay, a self-described demolition contractor from Cheyenne

who had been a write-in during the primary, carried the remaining 14 precincts. Carolyn and I had a great and interesting boat trip up the Nile.

I like to believe that all my sixteen years in state government were productive and that my last term was the most interesting. Certainly it helped to improve the state's finances. The travel for the Department of Interior got tiresome but my service on committees for Secretaries Jim Watt and Don Hodel was most interesting and educational. Watt, of Lusk and Wheatland, took a beating from the media, et al., but his creation of the Mineral Management Service was a giant step for fiscal responsibility.

With Carolyn at my side the press seemed surprised when I made the announcement that I would not be a candidate for elective office again. They were, however, very complimentary and I was flattered.

To all those present politicians and to those still to come, my free advice is to retire too soon rather than too late.

The author, one of the most popular people ever elected to statewide office in Wyoming, lives in retirement in Cheyenne and Arizona. He is a long-time member of the Wyoming State Historical Society and, since 1996, he has served on the Board of Editors of Annals of Wyoming.

BEYOND A LITERARY ADVENTURE:

BONNEVILLE'S AND FRÉMONT'S CONQUESTS OF THE WIND RIVERS

BY VERNON L. VOLPE



Frémont's ascent, from Republican campaign literature, 1850s.

Wyoming's Wind River Range can still tempt today's tourist or hopeful hiker. When these majestic mountains are viewed from nearby Pinedale the modern visitor no doubt understands why the range's first American explorers would endeavor to climb its most lofty summits, perhaps Frémont Peak which seems to dominate the mountain vista, or Gannett Peak, officially the highest spot in the state.¹

The first recorded climbs of these fabulous mountains belong to Captain Benjamin Bonneville and Lieutenant John C. Frémont, both members of the U.S. Army but men who hiked Wind River trails for quite different reasons.² While Bonneville's motives for seeking to cross this range have been capably recorded by the famous American author Washington Irving, the reasons Lieutenant Frémont came to Wyoming's Wind Rivers have not been carefully examined by modern scholars. This was unfortunate. For the record reveals that the famous young explorer scaled the heights of the Wind River Mountains for remarkably romantic reasons, but not the ones usually assumed.

Despite earning intense scholarly criticism, Frémont's admittedly controversial life has not always received systematic investigation. Certainly his 1856 run for the presidency and his abortive efforts to free Missouri's slaves early in the Civil War have inspired considerable study. But while the record of his five western expeditions has encountered rather diligent study, surprisingly little scrutiny has been

granted the origins of his famous first mission along the Oregon Trail in 1842.³ This historic journey brought the young officer of the Army's Topographical Corps through Wyoming's South Pass, already a noted corridor through the Rockies for westward bound travelers. And then late in the summer of 1842 Frémont undertook a well-publicized climb in the Wind River

Mountains, claiming that the summit ultimately reached represented the highest in the entire Rocky Mountain chain. After raising an American flag—"where never flag waved before"—Frémont later highlighted this mountain adventure in his popular official report of the expedition which focused so much attention on the overland trail.⁴ Pioneers would read of Frémont's exploits while contemplating their own western travels; the memorable scene upon the Wind River summit would be portrayed again and again by



Library of Congress

John C. Frémont

artists as well as those supportive of Frémont's political ambitions.⁵ As such depictions of the famous climb proliferated, Frémont's dramatic jaunt to the top of the

¹The fur trappers had explored the Wind River region thoroughly, but not necessarily the high peaks. Moreover, many assumed the entire region lay in "American" territory, although the exact location of the summits climbed by Bonneville and Frémont remained unclear. To pinpoint the position of South Pass represented (in theory) one of Frémont's key tasks. He did verify that the pass's latitude placed it just north of Mexican territory (marked by the 42nd parallel as established in the 1819 treaty with Spain); then the 1846 Oregon treaty with Britain would confirm the entire region as "American."

²Which peaks Bonneville and Frémont actually climbed provide continuing debate for mountain enthusiasts. One line of thought (not currently popular) is that Bonneville climbed the peak in the Wind Rivers name bearing his name. Another is that Bonneville in fact climbed the highest peak in the range, Gannett. See Orrin H. Bonney and Lorraine G. Bonney, *Guide to the Wyoming Mountains and Wilderness Areas* (Chicago: Swallow Press, 1960), 12-13, 375-376, 386-391, 499. Yet the Bonneys also insisted that Frémont had climbed Woodrow Wilson Peak, but Frémont Peak seems the more likely choice today. See Joe Kelsey, *Climbing and Hiking in the Wind River Mountains* (San Fran-

cisco: Sierra Club, 1980), 56-57. A recent hiking guide assumes that Frémont did climb the peak named in his honor, but suggests that Bonneville may have climbed either Mount Chauvenet or Wind River Peak. Ron Adkison, *Hiking Wyoming's Wind River Range* (Helena, Montana: Falcon Press, 1996), 26-27.

³Frémont has been the subject of many biographies, several overly critical. The best study is Allan Nevins, *Frémont: Path-marker of the West*, available in several editions, including a paperback edition published in 1992 by University of Nebraska Press.

⁴Frémont's reports were ordered published by the U.S. Senate and then went through several private printings. The texts of the reports are easily accessible to the modern reader in *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*, vol. 1: *Travels from 1838 to 1844*, edited by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970). The text of the first Frémont report from Jackson and Spence will be hereafter referred to as "Frémont Report."

⁵In 1898 the U. S. Post Office would select Frémont's pose upon the Wind River peak for one of its first commemorative stamps. Herman J. Viola, *Exploring the West* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1987), 67.

Wind River peak came to symbolize the heroism of America's westward drive for empire.⁶

Yet despite the notoriety surrounding Frémont's feat in ascending the Wind River summit, historians have not scrutinized completely the motivations for the apparently romantic gesture. Many have retold the story, but most apparently assume that Frémont determined to climb the peak literally on the spur of the moment, supposedly a sublimely characteristic act of impulse. One student of the Frémont expeditions believed that youthful enthusiasm drove Frémont to climb the mountain "because it was there." Perhaps the leading authority on western exploration, William Goetzmann, remarked that Frémont's planting of an American flag atop the Wind River peak amounted to "an impulsive, boyish gesture," but one that captured the nation's fancy. The most recent Frémont biography claims that the youthful explorer "suddenly" decided to climb the peak after becoming fascinated by the mountains he encountered.⁷ Actually the record indicates a completely different interpretation must be adopted, one surprisingly more intriguing even than the story of a handsome young soldier who braved a high mountain peak to hoist America's symbolic claim to the West and all its treasures.

Native Americans no doubt had wondered at the mysteries of the Wind Rivers for untold years and mountain men had scouted the region, but the mountain range had remained largely unknown to the burgeoning American nation far to the east. This would be forever changed by Washington Irving, then America's most celebrated writer. Recognized as the father of the short story for such gems as "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Irving is today perhaps not much appreciated as a leading interpreter of the American West before the Civil War. After a long sojourn (some 17 years) in Europe, Irving returned to America facing the eager expectations of his countrymen. He would not disappoint those who hoped his talents would turn to American themes. In 1832 Irving undertook a brief junket across the plains into what is today Oklahoma, subsequently penning his first western tale, *A Tour on the Prairies* (published in 1835). Next, Irving contracted with one of America's wealthiest citizens, John Jacob Astor, to tell the story of the ambitious but initially unsuccessful attempt to launch America's fur trade enterprise to the Oregon Country at Fort Astoria. The Wind River Range thus first came to widespread public attention in Irving's classic tale, *Astoria* (published in 1836), but it would be still another Irving production, *The Adventures of*

Captain Bonneville, U.S.A. (originally titled *The Rocky Mountains* when published in 1837), that would further highlight the high Wyoming peaks.⁸

Captain Benjamin Bonneville (like Frémont, of French origins) evidently had not been satisfied with his service at various American frontier Army posts. He thereupon hatched a scheme to inject himself squarely into the center of the expansive young nation's westward surge by entering the potentially lucrative fur trapping trade. Scholars still debate the actual motivations behind the Bonneville enterprise. Few accept that it was simply a fur-trading venture. Some suspect that secret government motives were involved, to spy on the Indians or the British, probably both. At the very least, the episode is characteristic of the often strange combination of motives driving America's imperial thrust westward. From Lewis and Clark through the expeditions of Zebulon Pike and even John Frémont, government sponsored exploring missions held sometimes unspoken but scarcely secret geopolitical objectives. Bonneville evidently intended to scout his chances for profit in the fur trade while simultaneously serving national interests by collecting intelligence about the much-prized northwestern region.⁹ In any event, his superiors granted Bonneville a most unusual leave of absence to pursue his

⁶ More so than Bonneville, Frémont's political connections ensured that his Wind River climb would achieve greater attention. See Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years' View; or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, From 1820-1850* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854), vol. 2, 478-479, and Senator Lewis Linn in *Congressional Globe*, 27th Congress, 3rd Session, 389-390.

⁷ Ferol Egan, *Frémont, Explorer for a Restless Nation* (New York: Doubleday, 1977; reprint ed., Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985), 103; William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 82; Andrew Rolle, *John Charles Frémont: Character as Destiny*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 41. In "Division of the Waters: Changing Concepts of the Continental Divide, 1804-1844," *Journal of Historical Geography* 4 (1978): 367, John Logan Allen also construes Frémont's climb as a symbolic gesture. Allen's latest work does not directly address this issue. Allen, ed., *North America Explored, A Continent Comprehended* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1997), 345-346.

⁸ The best edition of Irving's *Bonneville* is Edgeley W. Todd, ed., *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A., in the Rocky Mountains and the Far West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961). For a revealing discussion of Irving's negotiations with Astor, see Peter Antelyes, *Tales of Adventurous Enterprise: Washington Irving and the Poetics of Western Expansion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 150-156.

⁹ Edgeley Todd discusses these issues most capably in his introduction to Irving's *Bonneville*, xxiv-xxxvii. See also William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1966), 149-150.

unspecified intentions. Captain Bonneville's travels in the mountains pursued a variety of objectives; one of his brigades led by Joseph Walker skirted the Great Salt Lake (at one time known as Lake Bonneville) and then completed a long reconnaissance all the way to Mexican California.¹⁰ In the meantime Bonneville probed British strength in the Oregon Country, observed the Indians, and planned potential military posts in the region. Irving's detailed account of the Captain's exploits thereafter brought the Wind Rivers further to the attention of American readers.

Wyoming's Wind River Mountains stood nearly astride the main routes fur trappers followed into the beaver regions of the Rockies; the Wind Rivers also loomed in the background at many of the annual rendezvous sites established by the fur traders. It was probably natural therefore that eventually authors would tell of this beautiful chain of mountains with the alluring name. (And by the late 1830s Alfred Jacob Miller had publicly displayed his portraits of the Wind River Range).¹¹ What is more interesting is that some, including Washington Irving, would then jump to the conclusion that these mountain peaks represented some of the highest in the Rockies. No clear reason for this exists other than that the much higher peaks to the south in today's Colorado had not become objects of either

literary attention or scientific study, aside from the rather cursory surveys by Zebulon Pike and Stephen Long. (And apparently the mountain men had speculated around their campfires that the Wind River peaks represented the Rockies' highest.) In truth the peaks of the Wind River Range could not match the loftiness of Colorado's highest summits. Indeed, Frémont's claim to glory must face the fact that the peak he ascended (probably either Frémont Peak or Woodrow Wilson) was not even the highest in the Wind River range (an honor held by Gannett Peak). Naturally no one knew this at the time.

Irving first boasted of the Wind River peaks in his famous historical narrative of the Astorian enterprise. In this memorable tale based on historical circumstances, Irving drew particular attention to the interesting origins of the Wind River name and the beauty of the surrounding region.¹² This famous American storyteller then went on to speculate about the majestic heights of the mountains and to rhapsodize about the range's central place in western geography:

One of its peaks [the Wind River Range] is probably fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, being one of the highest of the Rocky Sierra [or mountains]. These mountains give rise, not merely to the Wind or Bighorn River, but to several branches of the Yellowstone and the Missouri on the east, and of the Columbia and Colorado on the west; thus dividing the sources of these mighty streams.¹³

This revealing view commanded by the Wind River summits, so vividly sketched by Irving who had never viewed the scene, would reappear in Bonneville's narrative as well.

It should be noted that in this case Irving merely speculated on the peak's altitude and claimed it must be "one of the highest" of the Rocky Mountains. Captain Bonneville, and subsequently Frémont as well,

¹⁰ See Bil Gilbert, *Westering Man: The Life of Joseph Walker* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983).

¹¹ Miller's paintings of the "Mountains of the Winds" had been included in public showings in Baltimore and New York in the late 1830s. The shows had attracted newspaper attention as well. See Marvin C. Ross, ed., *The West of Alfred Jacob Miller* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951; reprint ed., 1968), xxii-xxiv and Ron Tyler, ed., *Alfred Jacob Miller: Artist on the Oregon Trail* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1982), 35-39.

¹² In *Astoria*, Irving reported that the Wind River, a tributary of the Big Horn, earned its name from the winter blasts of wind that swept across the valley through "a narrow gap or funnel in the mountains." Washington Irving, *Astoria; or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains*, edited by Edgeley W. Todd (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 253-256.

¹³ Irving, *Astoria*, 254-256.



Washington Irving

would assume the Wind River peak each climbed to be the highest in the entire western chain. Bonneville's claim derived from his extensive travels throughout the region; Frémont could point to the conclusions of the mountain men recorded for history by Irving. But Frémont would go one better by measuring the high peak scientifically, as we shall see.

At one point during his wanderings in September 1833 Bonneville sought to quickly reenter the Green River valley by crossing the Wind River Range (from east to west) from the Popo Agie area. An arduous journey followed through the ravines and up the heights of the Wind Rivers, leading Bonneville to ascend a high peak to afford a better view. The Captain's struggle to attain the summit of this unspecified peak allowed Irving once again to marvel at the incredible panoramic view provided by the Wind River summit. This mountain vista beheld "valleys glittering with silver lakes and gushing streams," portrayed once more by Irving as the sources of the West's great rivers:

Beyond the snowy peaks, to the south, and far, far below the mountain range, the gentle river, called the Sweet Water, was seen pursuing its tranquil way through the rugged regions of the Black Hills. In the east, the head waters of Wind River wandered through a plain, until, mingling in one powerful current, they forced their way through the range of Horn Mountains, and were lost to view. To the north, were caught glimpses of the upper streams of the Yellowstone, that great tributary of the Missouri. In another direction were to be seen some of the sources of the Oregon, or Columbia flowing to the northwest, past those towering landmarks the Three Tetons, and pouring down into the great lava plain, while, almost at the captain's feet, the Green River, or Colorado of the West, set forth on its wandering pilgrimage to the Gulf of California. . .¹⁴

Although in this second instance Irving reported Bonneville's claim that this peak might represent the "loftiest point of the North American continent," in this context Irving expressed some doubt due to Bonneville's inability to verify the peak's height through scientific means. The importance of this passage (or the earlier one in *Astoria*) is that evidently it had come to the attention of a young lieutenant of the Army's Topographical Corps. John Frémont, thanks to his apprenticeship served with the French scientist Joseph Nicollet, was a rare American qualified to determine the altitude of the peak by a new method using a barometer, a technique introduced to America by Nicollet. Eventually Frémont would become the first



B. L. E. Bonneville as General

American to employ this method to judge the height of a mountain peak; he would then proceed to claim the honor of scaling America's highest peak. Not only had the Irving narratives induced Frémont to claim that the Wind River peaks represented the Rockies' highest, but most amazingly, the evidence suggests that Irving's writings had inspired the young officer to undertake the quest in the first place.

The work of Washington Irving could hardly have failed to escape Frémont's notice. If it had, surely John's talented wife Jessie or her father, Senator Thomas Hart Benton from Missouri, would have introduced him to it. Senator Benton had long promoted American enterprise and emigration to Oregon, at least partly motivated by the legacy of the Astorian venture so memorably recorded by Irving. Jessie inherited her father's passion and no doubt drew on this as she helped John complete his official government report once he returned to Washington. In any event, convincing evidence exists that the Frémonts had been aware of Irving's work's; their description of the view John obtained from the summit of his Wind River peak

¹⁴ Irving, *Bonneville*, 187-191.

followed quite closely the literary standard earlier established by Irving in *Astoria* and *Captain Bonneville*. In completing their report in 1843 the Frémonts constructed a famous scene upon the Wind River summit, including John's raising of an American flag, his encounter with a solitary yet symbolic bee, and an amazing view strikingly reminiscent of that sketched (twice) by Irving. Like Irving's *Bonneville*, Frémont too spied shimmering lakes and streams that gushed, giving birth to the West's most impressive rivers:

On one side we overlooked innumerable lakes and streams, the spring of the Colorado of the Gulf of California; and on the other was the Wind River valley, where were the heads of the Yellowstone branch of the Missouri; far to the north, we just could discover the snowy heads of the *Trois Tetons*, where were the sources of the Missouri and Columbia rivers, and at the southern extremity of the ridge the peaks were plainly visible, among which were some of the springs of the Nebraska or Platte river.¹⁵

Irving had not climbed atop the Wind Rivers as Bonneville and Frémont had, but neither had Jessie Frémont. And John, unlike Bonneville, had assaulted the mountain from the western slopes. Still the Frémonts adopted Irving's literary version to capture



John J. Abert

National Archives

the significance of the scene John had encountered after a taxing climb into the mountains. Written with the help of his imaginative wife, a young lady well-versed in the lore of western literature, Frémont's version not surprisingly adopted a literary convention well-established in Irving's historical accounts of the Wind River Range.

Considering Frémont's evident close reliance on Irving's published works, surprisingly little attention has been focused on the explorer's reasons for coming to the Wind River Range. Scholars have usually noted the young lieutenant's willingness to exceed his official instructions—abetted no doubt by his powerful father-in-law—and they have been especially observant (and critical) of his tendency to act impulsively. But the available evidence now suggests that there was more method than madness to Frémont's sometimes impetuous search for fame and glory. In point of fact, while it is no doubt true that Frémont exceeded his written instructions, he had not done this merely on an impulse. Indeed, the jaunt to the Wind River Mountains had been carefully researched and deliberately planned. The remaining romantic part is that Frémont's Wind River heroics had been inspired by the prose of America's most famous author. Irving's tales of earlier exploits in the fabulous chain of mountains with the captivating name evidently induced the Frémont family to take equally dramatic action, including preparing for the climb in advance.¹⁶ To reach the Wind River peaks—a region considerably north and west of the Oregon Trail's route through South Pass—Frémont would need to undertake a significant detour. Such a route had not been hinted at in any of his instructions.

The traditional view—that Frémont decided to climb the peak nearly on a whim—is all the more surprising considering that Frémont had not been silent on his reasons for climbing the peak. His report, written admittedly after the fact, provides ample clues about his intentions to scale what he believed was the West's highest peak. Although the lieutenant had not been

¹⁵ "Frémont Report," 271-272.

¹⁶ Some scholars may have been aware in general terms of the Frémonts' subsequent reliance on Irving's published works in preparing their reports. For example, Allan Nevins in *The Dictionary of American Biography* v. 7 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 20, noted that the Frémonts may have "modeled" their works on that of Irving. (But in his famous biography of Frémont Nevins just briefly mentioned Irving.) On the other hand, the most recent biographies of John and Jessie do not mention Irving at all. Neither does Irving's name appear in the indexes of the standard edition of the Frémont reports. In any event, Irving's specific influence, particularly in motivating Frémont's objective before the fact, has not been completely recognized.

ordered to go beyond South Pass so as to venture into the Wind River region, his report indicates that he intended to do this from the beginning. And in this case, Frémont's intentions receive substantiation from his able but mostly dissatisfied assistant, Charles Preuss. Several key statements in the Preuss diary suggest that Frémont had intended to visit the Wind Rivers, apparently precisely to verify a remarkable claim made in the Irving narratives.

To appreciate the motivations behind Frémont's supposedly impetuous act we must reconsider many years of American interest in the western landscape. Fur trapping was usually the immediate motivation but beyond this men sought fame as well as a clearer image of what lay beyond the far horizon. Lewis and Clark had found mostly rough going in the country to the north of Wyoming. Soon, however, the search for a better route across the continent did eventually uncover the South Pass, so called because it lay to the south of Lewis and Clark's famous route across the continent. The first white men to encounter the pass probably belonged to the homeward bound party of the Astorian enterprise, led by Robert Stuart in 1812. But this discovery was not widely publicized, leading to the pass's "rediscovery" in 1824 by Jedediah Smith's band of trappers under the overall command of William Ashley.¹⁷

After these initial forays the pass became somewhat better known, although its exact location and geographic attributes still remained mostly a mystery to learned men to the east. One apparent objective of Frémont's expedition would be to fix this position on the map, a goal that the eager young lieutenant achieved only with limited success. South Pass is admittedly a surprisingly broad open area. Travelers—including Frémont's party—often expressed surprise and even disappointment that the famous opening through the mountain wall was not a more impressive narrow gap or sheer chasm. Observers typically did not realize they had passed the continental divide until noting the streams flowed in the opposite direction. Thus, perhaps we can forgive the young lieutenant for failing to fix the precise location of South Pass, which he claimed was as easy to ascend as Capitol Hill back in Washington. (In other words, pioneer families and their wagons would have no difficulty). In any event, Frémont's ultimate objectives exceeded merely a visit to the strategic South Pass, no matter how important that mountain passage might prove. Indeed, a foray into the mysterious Wind Rivers—so dramatically portrayed in print and on canvas—promised to elevate the young lieutenant even higher in public esteem.



Southwest
Museum, Los
Angeles

Jessie Benton Fremont

Records now show that Lieutenant Frémont had been initially directed by his superior officer, Colonel John Abert, simply to survey an important leg of the Oregon Trail along the Platte River. But Senator Benton appealed his son-in-law's instructions, hoping that South Pass could be included in the orders.¹⁸ Benton in particular had long been aware of the fur trappers' adventures across the pass and hoped to encourage U.S. expansion to Oregon as well. Abert probably hoped to placate the powerful senator but also feared overburdening the young officer. Thus, the colonel only informally agreed that Frémont could visit South Pass should circumstances permit. No mention had been made of venturing into the Wind River Range, certainly not to climb a certain peak there. But the evidence suggests that this was exactly what Frémont had in mind, perhaps from the beginning.¹⁹

¹⁷ For a highly readable summary of these events, see Robert M. Utley, *A Life Wild and Perilous: Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997).

¹⁸ For Frémont's written instruction see, Abert to Frémont, April 25, 1842, in Jackson and Spence, *Frémont Expeditions*, vol. 1, 121-122. I discuss in greater detail Benton's appeal of Frémont's orders in "The Origins of the Frémont Expeditions: John J. Abert and the Scientific Exploration of the Trans-Mississippi West," forthcoming in *The Historian*.

We know that Frémont had such intentions because he told us so, at least indirectly, in his official report of the expedition. Prior planning obviously played a role in the 1842 mission. In addition to requisitioning barometers and other instruments to measure altitudes, Frémont arranged for a makeshift American flag—suitable for hoisting on a lofty summit—as well as additional equipment needed for the mountains.²⁰ (Depending on how far he advanced along the Platte River route, Frémont could encounter other mountains before reaching the Wind Rivers, but it is clear from the context that the equipment was meant entirely for that range). And according to Charles Preuss, Frémont had brought along some brandy precisely to “empty a glass on top of the mountain.”²¹ Of course, Frémont’s father-in-law had already appealed his written instructions so as to allow the young lieutenant to approach the Wind River region via South Pass. Such preparations hint at the mission’s actual goal, but that the “high peaks” of the Rockies represented the expedition’s ultimate destination is best revealed by the words of both Frémont and Preuss.

The journal of Charles Preuss—which did not come to light until finally translated and published in 1958—today provides the most convincing evidence in this case. For one thing the dour German artist and map-maker kept a regular journal that, unlike Frémont’s official report, was composed on the trail more or less on a daily basis.²² (Frémont had forbidden the men to keep journals intended for publication; Preuss wrote his private diary for the information of his “old girl,” his wife back in Washington City). Thus Preuss provides contemporaneous testimony, while Frémont’s remarks are, strictly speaking, after the fact. It is also true that close reading of the Frémont reports suggests that Jessie Frémont could embellish the mission’s activities to heighten the dramatic tension. A quest to find and climb the West’s highest peak suited her needs quite well. This could not, however, be the case with the private diary of Charles Preuss—which never had been intended for publication.

Clearly the Preuss diary is remarkably honest—at times painfully so—and without much embellishment. In many cases he severely criticizes his commanding officer—the man who had given him a much-needed job—for his obvious overexuberance and apparent incompetence. Yet it is the Preuss testimony that allows us to recognize that Frémont had been amazingly straightforward in his subsequent report about his original motivations for the journey. Whatever his official instructions, John Frémont intended to achieve fame by verifying the memorable predictions Irving

had made about the western mountains, specifically the high peaks of the Wind Rivers.

It has often been noted that Frémont showed inattention in failing to mark precisely the position of South Pass, presumably a key objective of his mission.²³ True, the South Pass is an open expanse more than a specific spot and consequently difficult to locate exactly. Beyond this, however, Frémont reported (and his map so indicates) that on his first trip through South Pass he traveled on the northern fringes of the pass area (or just to the south of the Wind River chain). At this point his report claimed that he intended to cross the dividing ridge several miles to the north and then to return to the more popular wagon road—ostensibly the main focus of his mission.²⁴ Yet just a few pages later in the report, Frémont admits to a much grander design. Noting again that these mountains held the headwaters of “four great rivers”—the Colorado, Columbia, Missouri, and the Platte—he wrote that after “having ascended the mountains,” he had intended to

¹⁹ Actually the Benton-Frémont family created an enduring myth that John’s expeditions were in fact secret missions carried on without the complete knowledge of the government. This was quite an exaggeration, although Benton had corresponded in private with Abert about John’s instructions. But the family may not have been completely dishonest in fabricating the myth in so far as the intention to visit the Wind River Mountains had not been officially approved by the Topographical Corps.

²⁰ Perhaps the best evidence of Frémont’s intentions are his vouchers for purchases made in St. Louis before his departure (dated in May 1842) and submitted to the Army following his return. Besides purchasing “mountain” barometers, Frémont also bought two pairs of “ice shoes” and other climbing equipment. When government auditors later questioned these purchases, Frémont submitted this justification: “The articles in this account were for use among the ice-fields in the Survey of the Wind River Mts.” See Jackson and Spence, *Frémont Expeditions*, vol. 1, 142-143.

²¹ Charles Preuss, *Exploring with Frémont: The Private Diaries of Charles Preuss, Cartographer for John C. Frémont on His First, Second and Fourth Expeditions to the Far West*, translated and edited by Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 43.

²² At one point Preuss remarked that he had to write daily in his diary, otherwise “I may forget important things.” His long account of the mountain climb was written on the trail a few days later. *Preuss Diary*, 36, 44.

²³ See, for example, Goetzmann, *Exploration & Empire*, 259. Frémont “neglected” to fix the location of South Pass on the outward journey. But he intended to revisit the spot several days later (to be further discussed), and on his return he did locate the wagon road through the pass and note its latitude. On his second journey the following year he took care also to note the longitude of the pass, although like other explorers his calculations of longitude were quite inadequate. (This was due primarily to the limitations of the instruments).

²⁴ “Frémont Report,” 253.

continue a complete circuit of the Wind River Range. After crossing the range via a pass "at the northwestern end of the chain"—inspired no doubt by Bonneville's earlier crossing of Union Pass—Frémont had proposed to then skirt the eastern slopes and return to his previous encampment on the north end of South Pass. Only a variety of circumstances forced him "very reluctantly" to abandon the plan.²⁵

The Preuss diary provides contemporaneous support for this revealing claim in the Frémont report. In fact, Preuss noted that only the headaches (literal and otherwise) the young lieutenant endured in climbing the Wind River peak induced him to return to the South Pass "instead of rounding the mountains."²⁶ Together with Frémont's actual movements, these records reveal the extent to which Irving's writings—especially on Bonneville's activities—had inspired Frémont's exploratory efforts. Even as he reached the long sought South Pass—which after all had been discovered by others—Frémont suddenly veered in a different direction. Did he hurry to the north on the most direct approach to the Wind River peaks? Had his desire to ascend the heights of the Wind Rivers and then to circuit the range been spurred by Irving's accounts? The evidence would suggest just such a conclusion and that this particular impulse had been one of long duration.

Preuss's journal provides further strong evidence that Frémont's original purpose was exactly to march past the South Pass in order to gauge the elevation of the Wind River Range's highest peak. As the Frémont party approached Fort Laramie in eastern Wyoming reports swirled of Indian dangers beyond the post. Preuss reacted to these rumors (on July 9th) as his detachment neared Nebraska's Chimney Rock. The threat appeared serious enough that Kit Carson, a favorite Frémont guide destined for hero status, reportedly issued an oral last will—a trapper custom. Under these circumstances Preuss thought it foolhardy to proceed on and thus risk many lives, "just to determine a few longitudes and latitudes and to find out the elevation of a mountain range." Better to turn back, Preuss confided in his diary, "and limit ourselves to the survey of the Platte."²⁷

Preuss evidently knew that Frémont's original instructions restricted him to the Platte survey, but he also apparently realized that the lieutenant had grander intentions. At Independence Rock (on August 2nd) Preuss again complained that the expedition still had many miles to travel even after crossing the mountains, presumably at South Pass. Frémont had evidently confided in his fellow mapmaker; Preuss's assistance would be essential in the success of the mission. Long before approaching the vicinity of South Pass, much

less the Wind Rivers themselves, Preuss knew that Frémont intended to press on to investigate the mountains more fully. And the prime purpose was to "find out the elevation of a mountain range."²⁸

With characteristic pessimism (Preuss hanged himself in 1854), Preuss in his private diary sought to deflate American boasting about the western mountains while also diminishing Frémont's claim to fame. (Preuss at times referred to his traveling companions as "American blockheads.") Disdainful of the Rockies in general and the Wind River peaks in particular, the proud German insisted that the American eminences could not hope to compare with the beloved Alps of his homeland. In doing so Preuss went on to report, with characteristic contempt, that "an American" had calculated the Rockies to be as high as 25,000 feet. This woefully inaccurate estimate perhaps did not merit Preuss's deprecating reply: "I'll be hanged if they are half as high, yea, if they are 8,000 feet high." Yet while Frémont's calculations subsequently proved more reliable than Preuss's complaints, interestingly enough the German's peevishness serves to verify that the Frémont party was well aware of previous estimates of the mountains in question. Both in *Astoria* and in *Captain Bonneville*, Irving had reported other estimates of the Rockies that claimed 25,000 feet as the high point. (Most probably, Frémont had repeated the 25,000 foot estimate to Preuss). Once again, the Preuss diary proves, rather unintentionally, that Frémont's was not merely an impulsive quest for romantic adventure, but a premeditated effort to verify earlier claims about possibly America's highest mountains.²⁹

Frémont, too, would later admit that the jaunt into the Wind River Range had been "beyond the strict order of our instructions" and the overriding purpose was to check the peaks' elevation. Preuss's diary reveals this

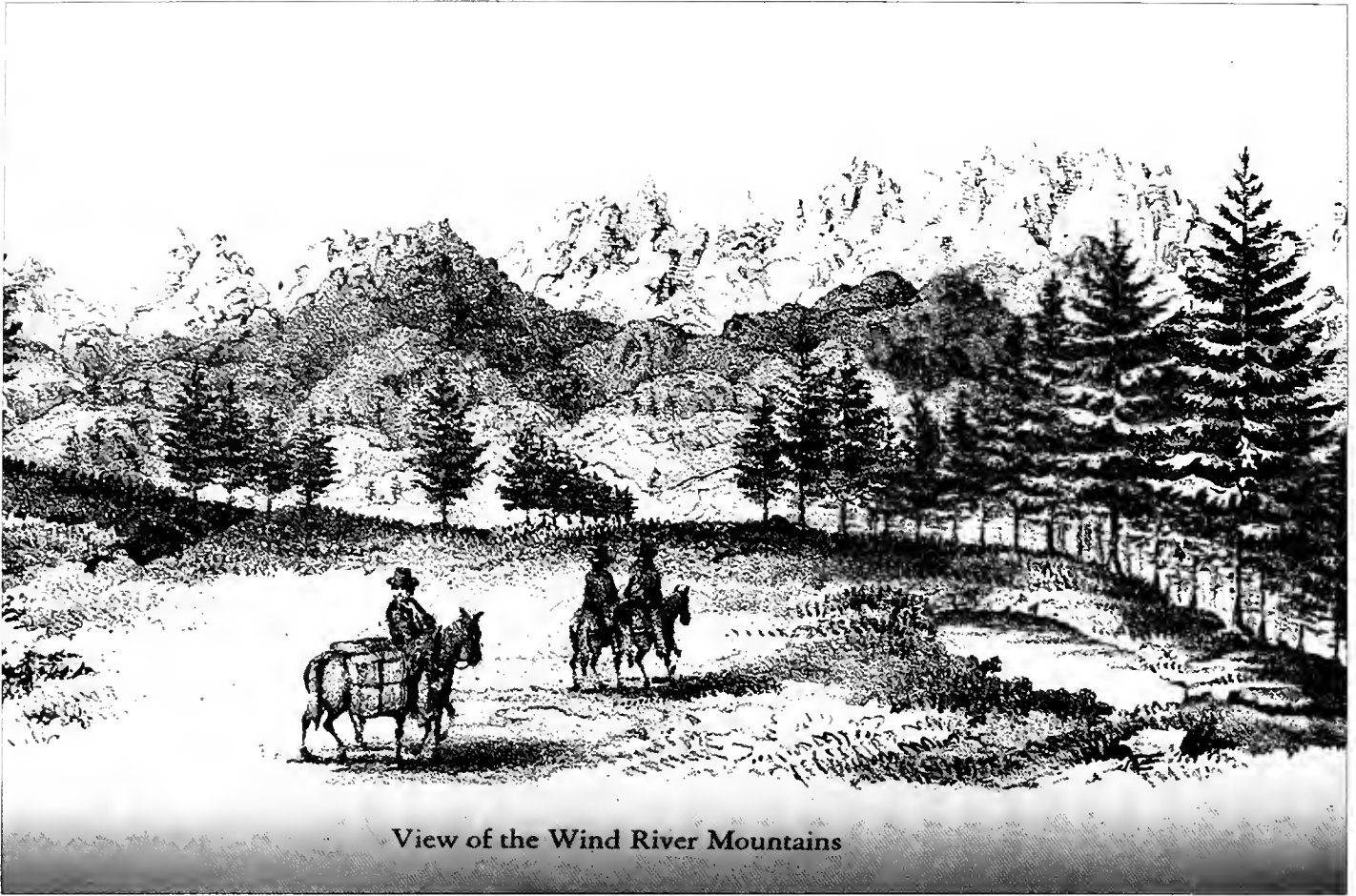
²⁵ "Frémont Report," 258-259.

²⁶ *Preuss Diary*, 46.

²⁷ *Preuss Diary*, 21-22.

²⁸ *Preuss Diary*, 32-33. At five days distance from the mountains, Preuss estimated that the party had another ten to fifteen days' work before turning eastward again. Interestingly enough, this was also Frémont's estimate for the planned circuit of the Wind River Range. Again, Frémont and Preuss appeared to have collaborated on the expedition's plans, well before reaching the mountains.

²⁹ *Preuss Diary*, 33, 45. Actually the "American" involved had merely reported the estimates of British fur traders in Canada. See Irving, *Bonneville*, 191, and appendix to Irving, *Astoria*. Even after taking barometrical readings Preuss constantly underestimated the heights of the Wind Rivers (at just 10,000 feet). The editors of his diary concluded: "One cannot avoid the impression that here, as elsewhere, Preuss deliberately gives lower estimates of the elevations to spite Fremont."

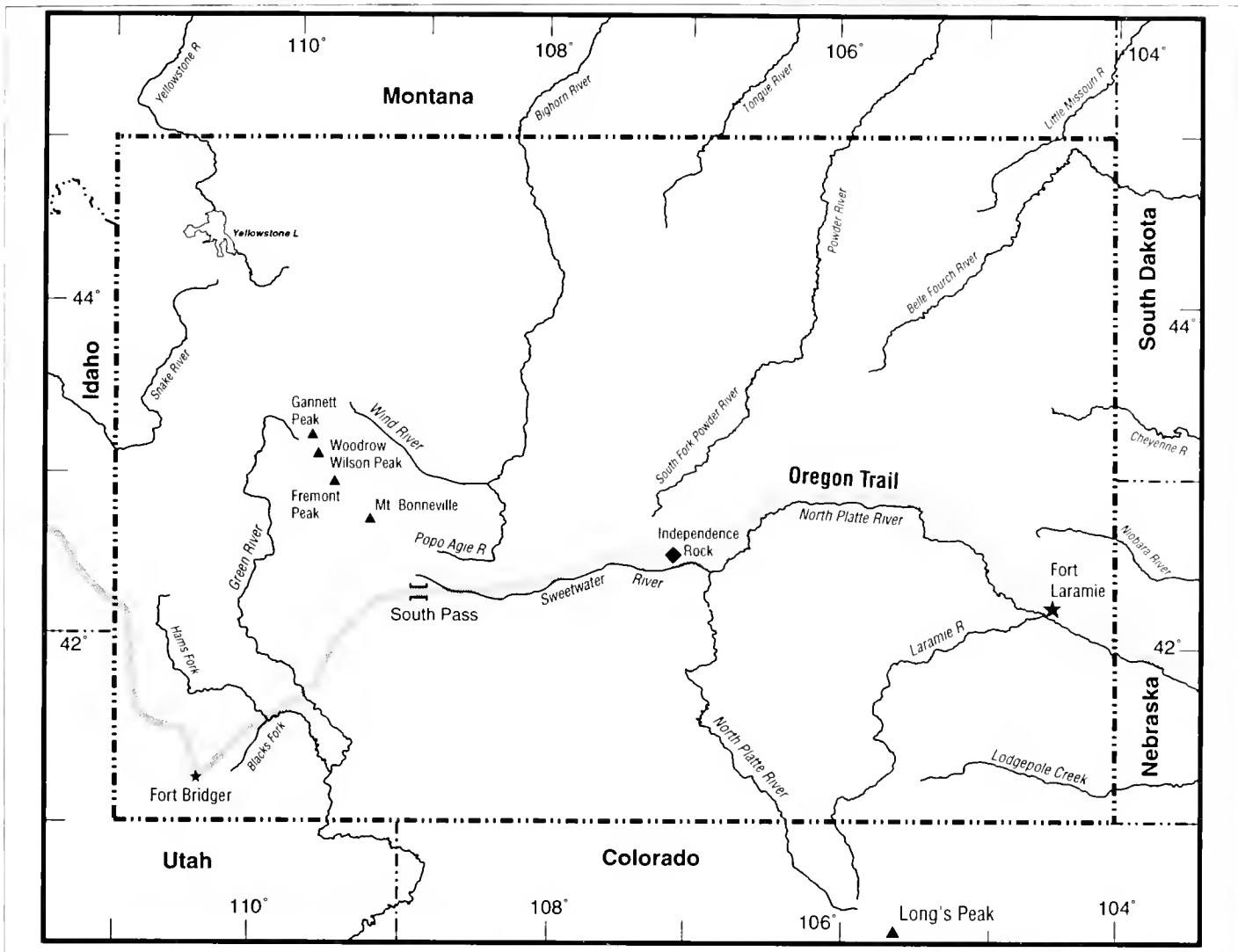


View of the Wind River Mountains

View of the Wind River Mountains (above). Central chain of the Wind River Mountains (below). Both from Fremont Report



From *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont*, v. 1, *Travels from 1838 to 1844*, edited by Donald Jackson and Mary Lee Spence (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 264, 268).



Map by G. Bennett, University of Nebraska, Kearney, Geography Dept.



Charles Preuss, Topographer with Fremont



Stamp issued June 17, 1898, commemorating Trans-Mississippi Exposition

same understanding, although Preuss is rather disgusted at the prospect. When the last barometer was unpacked and found to be broken, Preuss claimed to be relieved (but probably also disappointed) that Frémont could repair the vital instrument. "Otherwise," Preuss observed, "we would not have climbed the mountain." After all, the whole purpose of the extended detour was to verify the claims made in Washington Irving's western histories. Without barometers Bonneville had been unable to measure the region's "highest peaks"; Frémont intended to succeed where the Captain had failed.³⁰

As he led his small party toward the summit of the Wind River peak in mid-August 1842, Frémont suffered from altitude sickness—attacked by headaches, giddiness and vomiting he later admitted. Exhausted, hungry and quarreling with his friend Carson, Frémont insisted on the climb long after any impulse would have expired. Incredibly enough, Frémont and his men neglected to bring adequate food and clothing to reach the peak's summit. Like Zebulon Pike (who failed to climb his famous peak), the young lieutenant from the east had greatly underestimated the time and effort required to climb the high mountain.³¹ Frémont's men would sleep hungry and no doubt cold; some had even left their coats behind. Luckily the ascent of the mountain was not especially hazardous; modern climbers typically note the relative ease of hiking Frémont Peak.

The final assault party of six men struggled to find the proper route to the summit, and when Preuss managed to take a reading some five hundred feet below the true summit Frémont was tempted to fix the results simply by adding five hundred to Preuss's lower reading. Such a careless estimate, however, would not satisfy Irving's literary predictions. So the young explorer decided to try again, and after some difficulty he and Preuss calculated the elevation at the summit to be 13,570 feet above the sea.³² (Frémont Peak—probably but not certainly the peak in question—is some 13,745 feet above sea level. Gannett Peak is 13,804 feet.)³³ Irving had promised the peak stood some fifteen thousand feet high, but Frémont could not afford to be too disappointed. He had nonetheless conquered the Rockies' "highest summit" and had verified Irving's literary claim through the latest scientific method. He had reason to celebrate and mark the occasion by planting an American flag on the fabled summit.

As the Frémonts composed their report several months later, the couple proved amazingly honest about John's original motivations for the mission. Although in other instances the Frémonts surely added to the

report's dramatic effect, in this case the evidence suggests that they felt little need to be especially disingenuous. With a powerful father-in-law and the expansionist spirit as his protectors, Frémont freely admitted in print that the climb of the high peak—"an object of laudable ambition"—had been "beyond the strict order of our instructions."³⁴ Moreover, the Preuss testimony, provided paradoxically by a man often secretly critical of his commander, in this case supports the veracity of the Frémont report.

Just as Preuss related in his diary, Frémont early on admitted his purpose had been to climb the high peaks of the fabulous Wind Rivers. At St. Vrain's Fort (in today's Colorado) Frémont could spy Long's Peak nearby, while the even more famous Pike's Peak might also be visible but for the smoky atmosphere that day. While exploring such Colorado heights might prove fruitful, the lieutenant insisted "the proper object of my survey lay among the mountains further north." (Ironically, both Long's Peak and Pike's Peak are higher than Frémont Peak, but Irving had not drawn attention to those Colorado summits.)³⁵ These "snowy recesses" to the north remained his prime objective and he looked forward to their exploration with "great pleasure." A few days later he lamented the loss of an important thermometer by admitting "I had promised myself some interesting experiments in the mountains." Despite Preuss's dread of Indian threats, Frémont insisted on pressing on past Fort Laramie, perhaps precisely to reach the mountains. Just after leaving the fort (and

³⁰ Bonneville had considered but rejected the idea of using the extremely fragile barometers. See Todd's introduction to Irving, *Bonneville*, xxvi.

³¹ "Frémont Report," 262-263. Pike's men had already been suffering from the want of proper winter clothing. Then, like Frémont, his misunderstanding of distances in the western mountains tempted him to leave behind proper food and gear for the mountain climb. See Pike's journal in *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, edited by Donald Jackson (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), vol. 1, 350.

³² *Preuss Diary*, 40-47; "Frémont Report," 265-266, 270-271.

³³ For years afterward the public assumed that Frémont had ascended Frémont Peak and that this was the Rockies' highest summit. See, for example, the famous western map by Lieutenant G. K. Warren, published in 1859, which specifically marks "Frémont's Peak" and the elevation as measured by Frémont (the only such mountain elevation given on the entire map).

³⁴ "Frémont Report," p. 272.

³⁵ Of course, had Frémont merely wanted to measure the height of a famous western mountain using the new barometrical technique, Pike's Peak or Long's Peak would have been excellent choices. (The Pike and Long estimates of the high western peaks had been quite unreliable.) But America's most famous author had instead boasted of the record height of the Wind River peaks, thus capturing Frémont's attention and apparent resolve. (And, of course, these peaks already bore the names of other explorers.)

still east of today's Casper), Frémont noted in his report that "I determined to reach the mountains, if it were in any way possible." The first sighting of the Wind Rivers was still several days away.³⁶

Frémont shared his mapmaker's concern about the feared loss of the barometer. The incident was hard on his men, Frémont later wrote, considering that they had brought the barometer some one thousand miles only to see it damaged "almost among the snow of the mountains." But with remarkable ingenuity (given scant credit by Preuss) Frémont managed to repair the damaged instrument (replacing the glass vial with a powder horn no less), allowing the long anticipated mountain climb to continue. This saved Frémont from grave disappointment; he confessed that "a great part of the interest of the journey for me was in the exploration of those mountains."³⁷

This incredible admission should be considered in light of the rather limited instructions given the young lieutenant by Colonel Abert. Moreover, Frémont's report goes on to show that his desire to probe the Wind River Mountains derived from his wish to verify the claims of his mountain men forebears, so well-dramatized in Irving's famous works. As he entered the mountains Frémont welcomed the bracing mountain air, so praised he said by hunters, and expected that his mountain trek would reveal secrets "unknown to the wandering trappers of the region." Indeed, Frémont reported, "much had been said that was doubtful and contradictory" about these very peaks. But this trained man of science came with a specific purpose, to measure the height of these mountains—"considered by the hunters and traders the highest in the whole range." Again Frémont regretted the potential loss of his barometer, "the only means of giving them [the mountain peaks] authentically to science." Had he not have rescued the precious barometer, "the object of my anxious solicitude by night and day" would have been lost. No doubt these passages heightened the dramatic quality of the subsequent report, while not incidentally focusing attention on John's valued service to the mission's success. But these words reflected genuine concern as well—concern that John's effort to win public renown by verifying Irving's claims about the high Wyoming peak might end in embarrassment. Later the Frémont report further highlighted the importance of his mountain exploits by referring to the loss of some of his records in a capsizing on the upper North Platte River. Fortunately, Frémont admitted, other journals contained duplicates of the "most important" barometrical observations "which had been taken in the mountains."³⁸

What Colonel Abert later thought in reading Frémont's discussion of his mission's objectives is unrecorded. We do know that Abert appreciated how Frémont's success brought much needed attention to his Corps' valuable work. Of course too Abert would recommend that the Senate publish the lieutenant's impressive work and later would send his somewhat troublesome charge on further missions. But we also know that in subsequent dealings with his young subordinate Abert devoted strict attention to Frémont's well-demonstrated neglect of written instructions as well as established Army procedures. His official and no doubt private complaints about Frémont's behavior probably stemmed from this early experience with his now famous officer.³⁹

Many have overlooked how Frémont's intention to climb the Wind River peak had actually been devised and indeed premeditated.⁴⁰ Instead, historians commonly point out Frémont's (now obvious) mistake in claiming to have scaled the Rockies' highest peak. And although upon which peak Frémont planted his flag remains controversial, today it can be easily noted that it was not even the highest peak in the Wind River Range. But Frémont had done his best with the information available to him. While Colorado's lofty summits still awaited careful measurement, Frémont had diligently pieced together the available information before making his claim. His veteran companions had also agreed upon the specific peak selected for the assault. (To the untrained eye Frémont Peak does appear to dominate the Wind Rivers.) Moreover, Frémont could report that this was the opinion "of the oldest traders of the country."⁴¹ And had not Washington Irving, America's most famous writer, reported that

³⁶This journal entry was for July 26, 1842. The party had left Fort Laramie on July 21st; not until August 3rd would the Wind Rivers first come into view. "Frémont Report," pp. 238, 256, 260, 279.

³⁷"Frémont Report," 205, 226, 256.

³⁸"Frémont Report," 256-257, 260, 279.

³⁹For ample evidence of Abert's frustrations with Frémont see the frequent correspondence in Jackson and Spence, *Frémont Expeditions*, vol. 1, especially pages 123, 126, 127, 344-352.

⁴⁰In a work subsequent to his earlier *Army Exploration*, William Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 243, did remark offhandedly that Frémont's "monumentally impractical" gesture of climbing the Wind River peak "appeared to be from the first a part of the design" of the mission. But he did not pursue this supposition beyond this observation and he did not mention Irving's works (or the Preuss diary) in this context. A preconceived plan to measure scientifically a reported elevation of a mountain peak can not really be termed "monumentally impractical."

the Rockies' highest summit lay in the very Wind River Range that Frémont had bested? Who could dare dispute such a claim?

In retrospect it appears that there was precious little spontaneous about the Frémont climb into the alluring Wind Rivers. Indeed, the Frémont family had made rather impressive preparations for the attempt to verify a striking claim made in Irving's famous western histories and may have even calculated the effort to promote John's public notoriety. As a result, John Frémont's reputation for impulsive, romantic acts may require at least some reassessment. The famous quest to plant an American flag atop the Rocky Mountains now appears more as a staged event rather than an impractical if heroic gesture. But at least an act inspired by one of America's most famous romantic authors in turn stimulated artists and other writers to equally romantic flourishes. And we should now recognize how the Frémonts evidently encouraged such an artistic response by portraying John's conquest of the Wind River Mountains in a characteristically dramatic way, rather than as a serious scientific enterprise. Thus it was partly the Frémonts' fault that John became famous for planting a makeshift flag upon a far summit rather than for his skill in carefully repairing and operating a sensitive scientific instrument.⁴²

Which Wind River peaks Bonneville and Frémont actually climbed is today probably only meaningful to dedicated mountain climbing enthusiasts. Yet those who have debated this issue in print perhaps have not noticed the possible irony involved. Despite his much-publicized claims—which were revisited during the Pathfinder's 1856 presidential campaign—Frémont evidently did not climb the highest peak in the Wind Rivers (much less the entire Rockies). But if Bonneville indeed made it to the top of Gannett Peak, then he and not Frémont could boast of scaling the highest peak in the Wind Rivers. Of course, Bonneville could not specify which peak he ascended beyond remarking that it must be the region's loftiest. (Bonneville simply did not provide enough information to fix with any certainty which peak he scaled). Moreover, he could not measure the attitude of his peak as Frémont would do using quite up-to-date scientific methods. Yet Bonneville's conquest of the Wind Rivers would receive hardly any subsequent attention. Today's scholars of the westward movement typically recall Frémont's exploits; few remember the specifics of Bonneville's. Fewer still realize that Bonneville's feat had inspired Frémont's later but more famous effort—a lamentable

consequence of Irving's histories fading from modern memory.

By contrast Frémont has received extensive scholarly treatment, mainly due to the subsequent controversial aspects of his career. Bonneville too rose to the rank of general in the Civil War, but in a much less heralded fashion. Yet the Captain does not deserve to be nearly forgotten, considering the fact that one of America's most honored writers first told his tale. True, Washington Irving's account eventually earned some partly deserved criticism—considering his talents, some considered Irving's histories “hack work”—but his narratives should not be left gathering dust on America's library shelves. *Astoria* provides a valuable historical account of that enterprise while *Captain Bonneville* offers a close look at the operation of the Rocky Mountain fur trade and the lives of the famous mountain men.⁴³ Generally authoritative and well-written, Irving's western works deserve to be rediscovered by scholars and general readers alike. Perhaps like John and Jessie Frémont, one should peruse Washington Irving's *Captain Bonneville* just before packing for that family camping trip to experience the wonders of the Wind Rivers so enjoyed by both Frémont and Bonneville, the first known Americans to ascend this range's most prominent (if not highest) peaks.

⁴²“Frémont Report,” 271. And compared to the inaccurate estimates of elevation by Pike and Long, Frémont's calculations were remarkably accurate. Besides not being able to use the barometer method, Pike and Long had miscalculated the mountain heights by overestimating the elevation of the surrounding prairie base.

⁴³We now know—thanks again to the Preuss diary—that Frémont had made still another attempt to employ the latest technology in his expeditions. Unfortunately, his pioneering efforts to master the intricacies of the daguerreotype camera while on the trail did not result in usable prints. See *Preuss Diary*, xx-xxi, 32, 35.

⁴⁴For a capable defense of Irving's historical writing see Todd's introduction to Irving, *Bonneville*, xxxix-xlviii. See also, Bernard DeVoto, *Across the Wide Missouri* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947), 426-427.

Vernon L. Volpe is professor of history and a former department chair at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1984 and has published a number of works dealing with western exploration, antebellum politics, and the Civil War. He acknowledges UNK's Graduate Research Services Council for its support of his current project, a biography of John C. Fremont.

General Sheridan's Pass: 1807-1883

By James R. Wolf



American Heritage Center

General Philip Sheridan

Philip H. Sheridan, renowned as a Civil War commander and Indian campaigner, also deserves credit for his role in the exploration of the Yellowstone region. Not only did he sponsor a number of scientific expeditions there, but he himself went out into the field and found an easy passage between the waters of the Wind River and the Snake River in north-western Wyoming. His crossing of the Continental Divide is now known as Sheridan Pass — but others had been there before him.

The exploration history of the region can only be interpreted in the context of its geographic setting. Imagine the topography as being represented by a giant T. The cross-bar at the top represents the nearly impenetrable barrier that blocks direct travel to the Yellowstone Park country. The Wind River is to the east, while the headwaters of the Snake River (Jackson Hole) and the Green River lie to the west. The T's vertical bar is the Continental Divide — the lofty peaks of the Wind River Range, including Wyoming's highest point (Gannett Peak) and, to the north of them, a somewhat more friendly section that can be breached

in three areas — Togwotee Pass, Sheridan Pass, and Union Pass.¹

East-west travel could be accomplished more easily outside of this region either by following the Missouri River in Montana or by crossing the gentle contours of South Pass, the emigrants' Oregon Trail of the mid-nineteenth century, in central Wyoming. But if one wanted to proceed northwest from the lower Wind River (for example, from the mouth of the Popo Agie near

¹ The three named passes are the only ones with documented use in the years under review. Togwotee Pass is at an elevation of 9544 feet, on today's U.S. 26 - U.S. 287. The Continental Divide, to the south, crosses Two Ocean Mountain (1½ miles from Togwotee Pass) and then drops to an unnamed pass at an elevation of 9246 feet (above Moccasin Basin 5¼ miles from Togwotee Pass), crosses Lava Mountain (8½ miles), descends and then follows a wooded crest to Sheridan Pass (13½ miles) at 9245 feet. The skyline is fairly even to the south, dipping to 9360 feet near Fish Lake (22¼ miles) and then following a grassy ridgeline to Union Pass, at 9210 feet (34½ miles from Togwotee Pass) — measurements generally along the Continental Divide rather than airline distances. U.S. Geological Survey (7.5-minute series): *Togwotee Pass* (1965), *Lava Mountain* (1965), *Sheridan Pass* (1965), *Fish Lake* (1956), and *Fish Creek Park* (1967) quadrangles.

present-day Lander), the most direct way would be to go over Union Pass if headed to the Green River headwaters; over Sheridan Pass if headed to the Three Forks area of Montana (via Teton Pass and the Henrys Lake area); and over Togwotee Pass on the way to the region of Yellowstone Park. Travel northeast from the upper Wind River to the Yellowstone River could only be accomplished by way of Shoshone Pass, at the head of Dunoir Creek. To get there from the Green River, one would naturally go over Union Pass to the mouth of Dunoir Creek; from Jackson Hole, either Sheridan Pass or Togwotee Pass would be practicable, though Sheridan Pass is more direct. Each of these passes was well known to the native Americans.

General Sheridan set out on one of his exploring trips on August 12, 1882. From the mouth of Dunoir Creek, his party rode up the Wind River for about five miles. Crossing the stream, he ascended a very easy grade, through some open glades and beautiful parks, to the crest of the range. "*The pass was unknown to white men and seemed to have been used in the past only by Indians ... by far, the best pass I have ever seen over the Continental Divide,*" he reported. The descent the next day was "by no means bad," and led the party down to the Gros Ventre River.² Sheridan's conceit that the pass was "unknown" is wrong: the historical record amply demonstrates that other white men had preceded him.

The return of Lewis and Clark to St. Louis in 1806 stimulated efforts to tap the fur resources of the Missouri River headwaters. The first large expedition, led by Manuel Lisa, headed upstream in 1807. George Drouillard, who brought first-hand knowledge from his service on the Lewis and Clark Expedition, was a key member. The party had been strengthened even more by the employment of John Colter, another Lewis and Clark veteran, who was traveling homeward in 1807 but readily agreed to sign on.³ A winter camp, known as Fort Raymond or Manuel's Fort, was established at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Big Horn Rivers.

In November, Lisa dispatched Colter to make contact with the Indian tribes of the area, to invite them to come to Fort Raymond to trade.⁴ Colter left no written record of his trip, but it appears that he later gave an account to William Clark, who marked the route as he understood it on an extant manuscript map.⁵ The map reflects not only personal observations from the Lewis and Clark expedition, but information from the travels of Zebulon Pike, the Astorians, and John Colter himself. Several routes in the area of the Wind Rivers and

the Tetons are marked by dotted lines. The ones of primary interest here — interpreted as Colter's route — are: (1) from the Salt Fork of Stinking [now Shoshone] River to the upper Big Horn [now Wind] River, (2) from the headwaters of the Big Horn [Wind] River southwest to Crooks River and westward to the vicinity of Henrys River, and (3) from Henrys River eastward to Lake Biddle. A trace from the Big Horn to Crooks River by way of Colters River represents the outbound path of the Astorians, while a fork heading southeast from Crooks River to the Platte is the Astorians' return route. Finally, a distinct path runs from east of Henrys River across Southern [Raynolds or Targhee] Pass to the Madison River.⁶

Colter proceeded south from Fort Raymond, up the Big Horn and the South Shoshone River, and then descended Dunoir Creek to the valley of the Wind River.⁷ He crossed the Continental Divide and continued west-

² Lt. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan to Brig. Gen. R.C. Drum, Adjutant General, United States Army, Nov. 1, 1882. Sheridan Papers, Microfilm Reel 87, Library of Congress. Sheridan also characterized the pass as "much better than the Union Pass, to the south of it, or than the pass to the north of it, traversed by Captain Sanford Cobb Kellogg's command last year." Kellogg may have been at the unnamed pass above Moccasin Basin rather than Togwotee Pass, but a search of National Archives records for documentation of his route was unsuccessful. The general's most likely route appears as the "Sheridan Trail" on the U.S. Geological Survey *Kisinger Lakes, Fish Lake, Lava Mountain, and Sheridan Pass* 7.5-minute quadrangles. Sheridan actually gave the name "Lincoln Pass" to the crossing, in honor of Secretary of War Robert T. Lincoln, but some time after 1883 and before 1899 (when Coutant's history was published) it came to be known as Sheridan Pass.

³ Burton Harris, *John Colter: His Years in the Rockies* (New York 1952), 59-64. Oglesby, Richard E. *Manuel Lisa and the Opening of the Missouri-Fur Trade* (Norman, Bison Book ed., 1984), 40-46. Harris points out that two other men who had been with Lewis and Clark — John Potts and Peter Wiser [or Weiser] — were also members of the party.

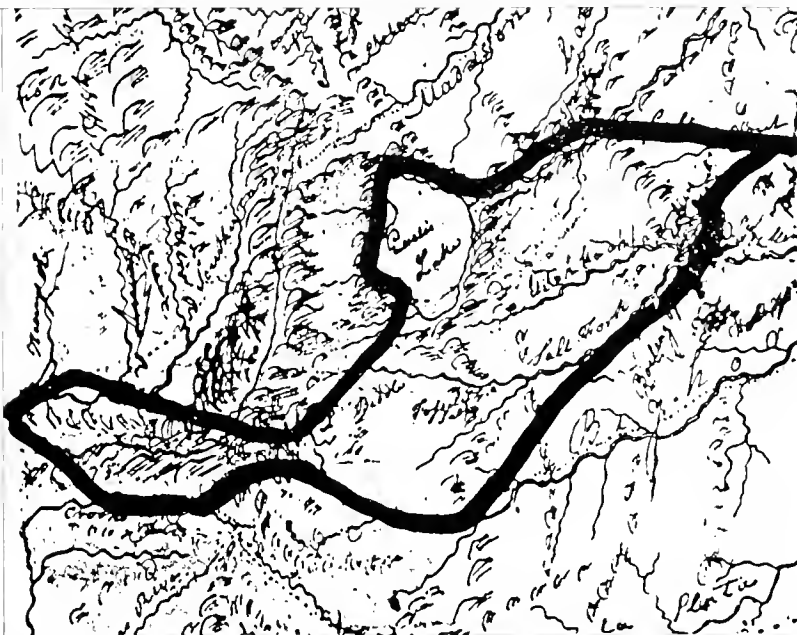
⁴ H.M. Brackenridge, *Views of Louisiana* (Pittsburgh, 1814), 91-92.

⁵ The map is reproduced as No. 125 in Gary E. Moulton (ed.), *The Atlas of the Lewis & Clark Expedition* (Lincoln 1983). An excellent copy of the portion discussed here is in Aubrey L. Haines, *The Yellowstone Story, Volume I* (Yellowstone National Park WY, 1977), 34. The original is at Yale University's Beinecke Library. The manuscript map also appears in Carl I. Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West: Volume Two, From Lewis and Clark to Fremont 1804-1845*, San Francisco 1958 as Map 291 (Wheat 291).

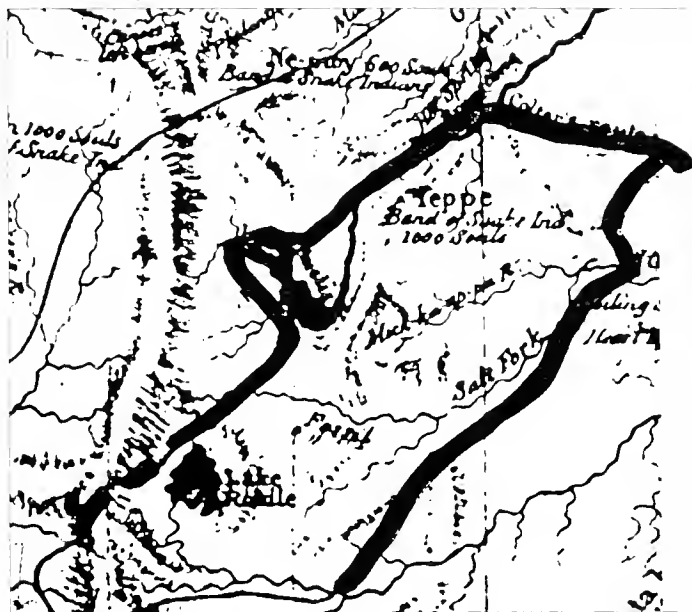
⁶ The map shows both Henrys River and Wiser's River, which suggests that Wiser had visited the western slope in 1808. His account of a route between "the upper branches of the Columbia" and "the middle fork of Madison's River" is cited in an 1810 letter from Reuben Lewis to his brother Meriwether Lewis. Oglesby, *op.cit.*, 96-97. "Perhaps, had Clark understood right, Wiser's R. and Henry's Fork were one and the same." Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver 1963), xxxiii (n.16).

ward, from Jackson Hole, over Teton Pass into what is now Idaho. *But how did he get from the mouth of Dunoir Creek to Teton Pass?*

Perhaps Colter crossed the Divide at Togwotee Pass. The manuscript map shows that when he first descended to Wind River, he turned right and proceeded upstream, northwest, a direction that would lead to Togwotee Pass. Then he would have descended along Blackrock Creek and the Buffalo Fork to the Snake River ["Crooks River" on the map] near the outlet of expansive Jackson Lake. We cannot assume, however, that the traveler would have seen the lake from the Buffalo-Snake confluence, as there are intervening bluffs and hills — though he might have had glimpses from 8650-foot Blackrock Meadows at a distance of over 20 miles from the lake. In fact, it is improbable that Colter viewed Jackson Lake, since the large body of water that appears on the map is drawn as a source of Wind River that is not connected to the Snake. But if Colter had in fact walked close to Jackson Lake, there is no way that he could have believed it to be in the Wind River drainage. For, in the first place, he would have recognized that it flowed south to Crooks River. And, further, having found the mountain barrier (at Togwotee Pass) to be so elevated (at 9500 feet), it is inconceivable that he would have regarded 6700-foot Jackson Lake as being located high in the mountains near the Continental Divide. Nevertheless, while a traverse of Togwotee Pass cannot be excluded, an alternate interpretation is that Colter crossed the Divide at Sheridan Pass and followed the Gros Ventre River drainage — all the way out



Colter's route, as shown on Clark's manuscript map (above with bold line added for clarity). Contrast the route with that shown on Samuel Lewis' engraving, below (again, the bold line added for clarity)



⁷The competing interpretations of Colter's route are summarized in David J. Saylor, *Jackson Hole, Wyoming*, Norman 1970, 216 (n.12). Harris favors Togwotee Pass, *op. cit.* at 103. Union Pass is preferred by Stallo Vinton, in *John Colter: Discoverer of Yellowstone Park* (New York 1926), 59. The theory that the route remained much farther north (i.e., never south of Yellowstone Park) cannot stand in the light of the new information contained in Clark's manuscript map, including its depiction of the Astorians' route in juxtaposition to Colter's. J. Neilson Barry, "John Colter's Map of 1814," *Annals of Wyoming* 10 (July 1938), 106. Barry's hypothesis was extended, with still greater speculation, in Merrill D. Beal, *The Story of Man in Yellowstone* (revised ed. 1956), 285-298. In discussing Colter's route, Wheat, *op. cit.* 54-55, declares that "Crooks River was unquestionably the Bear," but he provides no supporting argument. John G. White, cited by Wheat, fatuously suggests that Colter's River is the Big Sandy. (*A Souvenir of Wyoming*, 1926, typescript in Yellowstone

National Park Research Library, p.60.) To deal with the Atlantic outflow of Lake Biddle, Orrin H. Bonney takes Colter through the southern part of the Wind Rivers, across the Wyoming and Salt River Ranges and on to the Teton Basin — avoiding Jackson Hole altogether. *Guide to the Wyoming Mountains and Wilderness Areas*, Denver: Sage Books 1960, 25. Paul Chessler Phillips concurs that if Colter "had explored this country, he would not have made the Wind River the outlet of Jackson Lake," but he then opts for a route similar to Barry's. *The Fur Trade* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 2:261. Nolie Mumey would have Colter traveling in the counter-clockwise direction, transiting Yellowstone Park and the headwaters of the Green River, thus also passing by Big Sandy Creek, to South Pass and then turning north — once again, with no reasoned explanation. *The Teton Mountains: Their History and Tradition* (Denver 1947) 35.

of sight of Jackson Lake. After continuing westward into Idaho from either the Togwotee or Sheridan Pass route, he returned to Wyoming, probably by way of Falls River, and proceeded east. His course led him well above Jackson Lake, which he might not even have glimpsed. Lake Biddle, under this interpretation, turns out to be Heart Lake.⁸ And if Lake Biddle is in fact intended to represent Heart Lake, then the outlet stream that Colter would have forded, according to the map, would seem to be Brooks Lake Creek (elevation 7950) if Togwotee Pass was on the route or Lava Creek (elevation 7400) if Sheridan Pass was the place where Colter crossed the Divide. Because Heart Lake is at 7500 feet, the lower elevation of Lava Creek lends a bit of weight to the Sheridan Pass alternative.

Then there is the possibility of a crossing of Union Pass, which would take the traveler close to the Green River headwaters — something that would account for Clark's having inscribed that stream as "Colters River." One difficulty with this is that while Union Pass is marked with dots (*representing the route of the Astorians, discussed below*), you don't get there if you march northwest and head up the Wind River — a dotted-line course that would have no predicate unless it was intended to mark Colter's route. A further consideration is that there is no documentation that Colter was looking for the Spanish settlements, so one wonders why (assuming he crossed Union Pass) he would leave the descending valley and instead climb over the barrier of Piñon Ridge in order to get to the basin there (whether the Rio Grande or the Green).⁹ The more likely scenario is that Colter expected to come upon the Yellowstone headwaters but found the south-flowing Snake River instead: this prompted his proceeding further west and, when there was still no sign of anything that could be considered the Yellowstone, he then turned east once again.¹⁰

But Clark left a further record — the great "Map of Lewis and Clark's Track" published in 1814 with the *History of the Expedition under the Command of Captains Lewis and Clark*.¹¹ The map's engraver, Samuel Lewis, did an excellent job of copying the cartography of the manuscript map. (*See map on previous page*). There are some minor differences, such as the shape and size of Lakes Eustis and Biddle [which has, enigmatically, become Lake "Riddle"]. But, overall, the faithfulness of the copy is striking. The most remarkable difference is that the route of the Astorians, which is evident on the manuscript map, is not identified on the 1814 printed one. One can surmise that Clark felt that it would have been anachronistic and irrelevant, in the report of the 1804-1806 expedition, for travels sev-

eral years later to be shown. Let us assume, therefore, that he instructed the engraver to omit the path of the Astorians — but that this instruction was misunderstood.

The result is that Colter's route is correctly indicated as it heads up the South Shoshone to the "Bighorn" [Wind], and Hunt's route on the lower Big Horn quite properly has vanished. But then, instead of continuing along Colter's true route, as shown on the manuscript map, almost all the way to Lake Biddle, the printed map has Colter following the dotted line [actually the Astorians' westbound route] over Union Pass. Why did Samuel Lewis make this mistake? The likely explanation is that, on the manuscript map, Clark had assigned the name "Colters River" to the head of the Green, and Lewis, instructed to show Colter's route, understandably would want to include Colter's River.¹² From there, the engraved map follows the Astorians, along the line

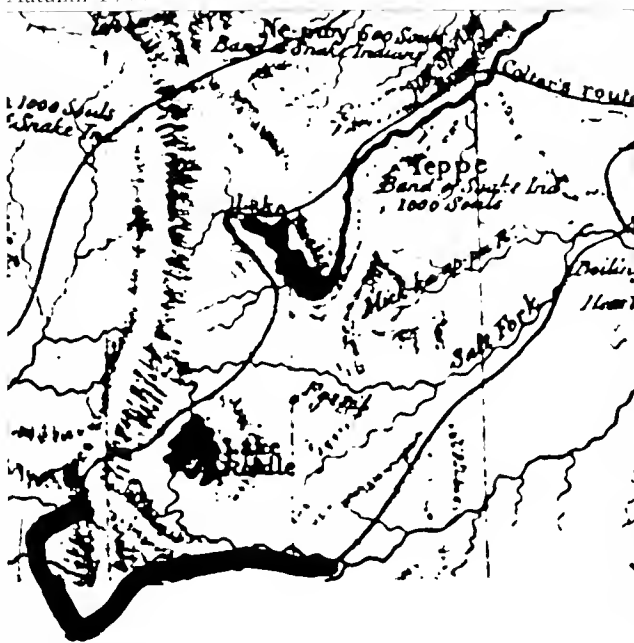
⁸ The most likely route east from Falls River would head up the Snake River from the Snake-Lewis confluence. Colter would have continued upstream for several miles, but would cut up Basin Creek where the Snake turned south. (It is possible, though unlikely, that he continued along the Snake as far as Coulter Creek and wandered $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile up that tributary, where the initials "J.C." were discovered, in 1889, in a large pine tree. The carving, sometimes attributed to Colter, is reported in Vinton, *op.cit.*, 61. It is more probable that the initials memorialize the botanist, John Merle Coulter, for whom the creek was named, as recorded in the "Map of the Sources of the Snake River" in F.V. Hayden, *Sixth Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey of the Territories ... Being a Report of Progress of the Explorations for the Year 1872*. Aubrey L. Haines, "John Colter," in LeRoy R. Hafen, *The Mountain Men*, v.8, 79, Glendale: Arthur H. Clark 1971.) After turning north on Basin Creek, Colter crossed a ridge that, though low, might have been interpreted as the boundary of the Wind River drainage. He would then follow along the west shore of Heart Lake (conforming to the map's indicating a course along the west bank of Lake Biddle). At 7500 feet, Heart Lake is high enough to be thought a possible source of Wind River. Harris and Vinton also traced a route by Heart Lake, but neither of them associated it with Lake Biddle. The cited Hayden map (Wheat 1233) shows Jackson Lake in its natural state, before it was dammed about 1906; the northern limit of the lake was 12 miles from the "Fall River" corridor, and intervening features blocked the view.

⁹ William Goetzmann has argued, however, that it is "highly probably that Colter was in search of the Spanish as well as Indians with beaver skins to trade." *Exploration and Empire* (New York, 1966) 20. To the same effect is Robert B. Betts, *Along the Ramparts of the Tetons* (Boulder, 1978), 43-44.

¹⁰ Colter's seeking the Yellowstone was suggested by Vinton, *op.cit.*, 59-60. Oglesby, *op.cit.* 56, notes Colter's probable awareness that the Crows were a trading people whose territory extended up the Yellowstone.

¹¹ No. 126 in Moulton, *op.cit.* (Wheat 316).

¹² The reason for the designation is unclear — perhaps Clark's desire to honor Colter in some way, or maybe just a thoughtless error on Clark's part.



The highlighted line indicates the portion of Astorians' route erroneously shown as Colter's route on Lewis' engraving (above, left). The highlighted line on the map (right) shows Clark's manuscript map route for the Astorians westbound through Union Pass in 1811.

of dots with superimposed circles, to Jackson Hole. This is the Snake River — marked "Crooks River" on the manuscript map, after a member of Hunt's party who returned with Robert Stuart on the trek east in 1812, but without any label on the 1814 map (since references to the Astorians were to be omitted). This left the engraver with a problem, as he needed to account for the dotted route northeast from Crooks River and another such dotted route to the west of Lake Biddle. He met the challenge by connecting these disjunct segments and making them part of Colter's route. His efforts made orphans of portions of the manuscript map — Colter's route along the upper Wind River and his travels west of Teton Pass. One can imagine Clark's discovering the error after a finished engraved plate was presented to him — but, since the Colter itinerary was not a portion of the Lewis and Clark journey, an error in its presentation might hardly have seemed sufficient to require a corrected drawing.¹³

The printed map (and, indeed, the manuscript map as well) show Colter's route ascending the Salt Fork [South Shoshone] for a few days at the start of this section of his travels, but then veering away a bit to the east. Although Burton Harris suggests that Colter crossed over to the Greybull drainage and traversed the Owl Creek Mountains on the way to the Wind River, an examination of the topography makes this seem doubtful: if one goes even a few miles up the South Shoshone, the mountain barrier to the east becomes

formidable.¹⁴ Upon the completion of his trek, Colter would have discussed his observations with Drouillard, who subsequently drew a map and presented it to Clark. The map, which bears notes made by Clark on the basis of conversations with Drouillard, shows the forks of the Shoshone as well as the course of the Big Horn, indicating that a route directly up the South Fork of the Shoshone to its source would lead to Spanish settlements.¹⁵ Had Colter detoured to the Greybull, and so reported to Drouillard, a more circuitous depiction would be expected.

The route will remain the topic of debate, yet Colter may well have been the first recorded traveler over

¹³ On March 29, 1813, Lewis was paid \$20.50 "for making Sundry Alterations in plates," so it might have been practicable to have made a correction if Clark had given the matter any consideration. Donald Jackson, ed., *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Second Edition* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois 1978), 600.

¹⁴ Harris, *op cit.*, 98-99. See DeLorme Mapping, *Wyoming Atlas & Gazetteer* (Freeport, Me. 1992), Maps 60, 59, and 49. Harris bases his view on the difficulty of crossing Shoshone Pass in the winter, but a President of the Wyoming State Historical Society, DeWitt Dominick, considered such a route, passing Bliss Meadows along the way, to be "logical." "President's Message," *Annals of Wyoming* 19 (April 1957) 104-105. (Colter's route, each way, between Manuel's Fort and the Stinking Water presents complex issues of interpretation that are not fully addressed here. See Harris, 83-90 and 111-114.)

¹⁵ The pertinent section of the Drouillard map (Wheat 289) is reproduced in John Logan Allen, *Passage through the Garden* (Urbana 1975), 380-81.

Sheridan Pass. Union Pass was Hunt's route, not Colter's. While Togwotee Pass would have been an attractive route to follow, the evidence for Colter's presence there is not conclusive.¹⁶

In 1809, Manuel Lisa again led an expedition up the Missouri. Once arriving there, the trappers ranged out over a large area, but left only fragmentary records.¹⁷ The next spring, after several of the expedition members had been attacked and killed by the Blackfeet, the bulk of those remaining in the area, led by Andrew Henry, crossed from the Madison River over to the Snake headwaters, setting up camp near present St. Anthony, Idaho. When Henry's party disbanded in 1811, three of their number — Edward Robinson, John Hoback, and Jacob Reznor — took a course eastward via Teton Pass and the Wind River to the Missouri River. On their way downstream, they met and were employed as guides by Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition of John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company. The three trappers then guided the Astorians back to the mountains and over the Continental Divide.

Hunt's diary leaves no doubt that the Astorians went over Union Pass, descended to the upper Green River, and then followed the Hoback River to the Snake: the southwesterly course from the Wind River, the halt "made beside Spanish River, a large stream on the banks of which, according to indian report, the Spaniards live," and the references to the Tetons ("three immensely high and snow-covered peaks") document the way.¹⁸ But Robinson *et al* had followed a more northern track on their earlier journey eastward. As Hunt observed, presumably with the trappers' route in mind, "we should have continued...to follow Wind River [i.e., instead of turning to go over Union Pass] and to cross one of the mountains because we would have reached the headwaters of this river; but lack of provisions forced us to make for the banks of Spanish River."¹⁹ The conventional interpretation is that the three trappers had earlier crossed the Continental Divide by way of Togwotee Pass.²⁰ But once again one must entertain the possibility that the route was over Sheridan Pass instead. It is not only lower than Togwotee Pass, but a much shorter route to the valley of the Wind River as well.

The 1812 return trip of the Astorians led by Robert Stuart resulted in the discovery of a low gap in the Rocky Mountain chains — South Pass, ultimately the route of the Oregon Trail — but, as historically significant as that was, it adds little to the present tale.²¹

In 1822, Andrew Henry joined William H. Ashley in organizing a new company to trap furs in the Rocky Mountains. During the winter of 1823-24, one of the venture's trapping parties, with Jedediah Smith

¹⁶ Henry Brackenridge wrote in 1811: "At the head of the Gallatin Fork, and of the Grosse Corne [Big Horn] of the Yellowstone, from discoveries since the voyage of Lewis & Clark, it is found less difficult to cross than the Allegheny mountains: Coulter, a celebrated hunter and woodsman, informed me that a loaded wagon would find no obstruction in passing." Morgan, *op.cit.*, xxxvi (n.22). This would not rule out any of the alternatives, though Togwotee Pass best fits the "head of the Grosse Corne."

¹⁷ However, from the evidence of the Reuben Lewis letter, n.6 *supra*, Jean Baptiste Champlain (with others, no doubt — including, perhaps, Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor) ranged to the south in 1809. The letter records that "Mr. Shamplain tells me that the martin abound in the mountains dividing the waters of the Spanish River as it is called, on what is supposed to be the Rio del nort, from the waters of some of the Southern branches of the Columbia, on a River falling into the Gulf of California, which he thinks most probable." This would seem to place Champlain on the upper Green River. Whether he got there from the west via Henrys Fork and Teton Pass or from the east by way of Union Pass cannot be determined. It is plausible that he did in fact go by way of Union Pass, as the information he (or some other anonymous trapper) conveyed may have led the way for a small party that included John Dougherty, one of Lisa's men. Dougherty's party, apparently in 1810, is reported to have ascended the Shoshone River to its source and crossed over to a river that they concluded was the Rio del Norte. Ralph E. Ehrenberg, "Sketch of Part of the Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers with a Description of the Country &c.," *Prologue: The Journal of the National Archives*, Fall 1971, 73-75. Thus, they may have been following the track pioneered previously by Champlain. On the other hand, Brackenridge writes that when Andrew Henry's party left their 1810-1811 winter quarters, some of the trappers "made their way south, into the Spanish settlements, by the way of the Rio del Norte," which is an indication that they were following the western slope, very likely following the footsteps of Champlain two years earlier, rather than going north, east, south, and then west. Morgan, *op.cit.*, xxxvi (n.21).

¹⁸ Philip Ashton Rollins, *The Discovery of the Oregon Trail* (New York 1935), 101-102, 286-288. C.G. Coutant identified Sheridan Pass as the place the Astorians crossed the Divide, but he provided no analysis. *The History of Wyoming, Volume I* (Laramie 1899), 82.

¹⁹ Rollins, *op.cit.*, 288.

²⁰ E.g., Rollins, *op.cit.*, cxxx (n.228); Morgan, *op.cit.*, xxxviii; Betts, *op.cit.*, 56.

²¹ It may be noted, however, that Robinson, Hoback, and Reznor — having left Hunt the previous autumn — apparently wandered through South Pass in 1812, before Stuart. They might have gone through Union Pass on their travels, though this would just be a matter of speculation. Washington Irving, *Astoria* (Edgeley W. Todd, ed.), Norman 1964, 371-72, nn. 28-29. They may also have explored the South Pass area in 1810. Donald McKay Frost, *General Ashley, The Overland Trail, and South Pass* (Barre 1960), 11.

as their captain, camped near a Crow village along the Wind River. According to the reminiscences of one of the trappers, James Clyman, written many years later, the location was in a narrow valley immediately north of Fremont Peak. Having learned from the Indians of the beaver resources of Jackson Hole, Smith's party set out in February 1824 to "cross the mountains north of the wind River [ra]nge but found the snow too deep and had to return and take a Southern course" to the Sweetwater. Union Pass has been identified as the route the party sought to follow, and there is no reason to think otherwise.²²

Ashley returned to St. Louis in 1825, from the Big Horn River, with a load of furs. It has been suggested that the party that had accompanied him from the Green River rendezvous returned to Jackson Hole by way of Togwotee or Union Pass; but the evidence is weak. The source is C.G. Coutant's report that Thomas Fitzpatrick and James Bridger "went up the Snake River and trapped in all the tributary streams... Bridger, with a small party, followed the Snake river to its very source and wandered around for some time in what is now known as the Yellowstone National Park." Some writers have taken the "Snake" to refer to the Shoshone River — but, even so, the continuation of their travels would take them into Yellowstone well north of our area. But Coutant elsewhere made it clear that the Snake River to which he referred was Washington Irving's "Mad River," which is today's Snake River (where joined by the Hoback River). Fitzpatrick and Bridger most likely returned from the Big Horn to South Pass and then headed north to Jackson Hole and Yellowstone.²³

Although Ashley dropped out of the fur trade in 1826, several of his men continued the enterprise as the partnership of Smith, Jackson & Sublette. After the 1829 rendezvous on the Popo Agie River, William Sublette is reported to have "led his company up the valley of the Wind River, across the mountains, and on to the very head-waters of the Lewis or Snake River."²⁴ Togwotee Pass would best fit this description.

The extensive trapping activity in both Jackson Hole and the Wind River valley probably resulted in occasional mountain crossings. One of the few instances that is documented is William Sublette's eastward journey from the 1832 Pierre's Hole rendezvous to St. Louis. Rather than venturing up the Hoback River and crossing South Pass, Washington Irving reports they chose "a different route through the mountains, out of

the way, as they hoped, of the lurking bands of Blackfeet."²⁵ This has generally been understood to refer to Union Pass, which is the most direct way, but it could refer to Sheridan Pass. In either case, the party would have ascended the Gros Ventre River; it would then depend whether they continued northeast up the North Fork of Fish Creek (to Sheridan Pass) or turned southeast and headed up the South Fork of Fish Creek to Union Pass. One clue — concededly, not very convincing — may be the map that accompanied Irving's text, with cartography by Benjamin Bonneville (Irving's source). It shows the Gros Ventre River rising all the way to the mountains in a northeasterly direction.²⁶

The map is even more suggestive in indicating Bonneville's own course when he left the Green River, on September 18, 1833, to rejoin the main party of trappers on the Wind River, just about the place where it issues from the mountains. "At the head of the valley, they were to pass through a defile which would bring them out beyond the northern end of these mountains." Given the evidence of the map, the route could have been through Sheridan Pass, though Union Pass seems the better choice since it is far more direct and it lies just beyond the northern end of the main peaks of the Wind River Mountains.²⁷

The diarist Osborne Russell left by far the most detailed report of a Continental Divide crossing in our area. He reported starting up the "Grosvent fork" [Gros Ventre River] with Joseph Gale's party of trappers, camping about two miles upstream on July 7, 1835. On July 8, they continued east through narrow defiles for 15 miles. After another 10 miles upstream, east, on July 9, they turned up a left hand fork. The description places them here at the confluence of the North and South Forks of Fish Creek. They continued northeast another eight miles and camped "among the high rough

²² Charles L. Camp, ed., *James Clyman, Frontiersman*, Portland 1960, 20-21; Dale L. Morgan, *Jedediah Smith and the Opening of the West* (Lincoln 1953), 89.

²³ Saylor, *op.cit.*, 60; Merrill J. Mattes, "Jackson Hole, Crossroads of the Western Fur Trade, 1807-1829," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 2, April 1946, 103-104; Coutant, *op.cit.* 84, 126; Irving, *op.cit.*, 262.

²⁴ Frances Fuller Victor, *The River of the West* (Hartford 1870), 58.

²⁵ Washington Irving, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville, U.S.A.* (Edgeley W. Todd, ed., Norman 1961), 66.

²⁶ John E. Sunder, *Bill Sublette: Mountain Man* (Norman, 1959), 112; Merrill J. Mattes, "Jackson Hole, Crossroads of the Western Fur Trade 1830-1840," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* vol. 39 no.1 (Jan. 1948) 12. Bonneville's "A Map of the Sources of the Colorado and Big Salt Lake" appears opposite p. 154 of Irving, *op.cit.*

²⁷ Todd, in Irving, *op.cit.*, 185, 200 (Union Pass); Coutant, *op.cit.* 178 (Sheridan Pass). The destination was near the mouth of Dunoir Creek, which could be approached readily from either pass.

mountains thickly covered with pine timber." The camp would have been at the mouth of Papoose Creek. On July 10, Russell writes that they "took a narrow defile which led us in an East direction about 12 mls. on to a Stream running S.E." The narrow defile is the climb to Sheridan Pass and the stream is the Wind River. After descending the Wind River about six miles, "the defile opened into a beautiful valley about 15 mls. in circumference" — the valley around the confluence with Dunoir Creek. The next day appears to have taken the party into the Dunoir valley, where "on the North and West were towering rocks several thousand feet high [Pinnacle Buttes] which seem to overhang this little vale."

Russell and a companion spent July 12 climbing Lava Mountain — a high summit where no other peaks appeared so high as the one they were on — discovering a vast pile of huge mountains crowned with snow (notably, the Breccia Cliffs) in the northwest. On July 13 they encountered some Shoshone Indians who described Yellowstone Lake as being off to the distant northwest and advised that the only way for the party to continue, with their mules and horses, was in a northeast direction. And so, on July 14, the party set out to climb over Shoshone Pass and proceed down the Shoshone River.²⁸

Russell recorded another traverse of the Divide, on July 22, 1838. With about 30 trappers (including Jim Bridger), he left the rendezvous on the Popo Agie River and followed the Wind River upstream. Leaving the valley, he headed west and "travelled over a high ridge covered with pines in a west direction about 15 Mls and fell on the Gros vent fork." Union Pass would provide the most direct route to the party's Jackson Hole destination; the recorded mileages and distances also imply that the party went that way. It is worth noting, however, that Russell made no mention of having previously crossed the Divide at this place, a consideration that adds a bit to the view that his 1835 passage was elsewhere, i.e., via Sheridan Pass.²⁹

The decline of the fur trade left the mountains and valleys to the local tribes. Exploring a route for a transcontinental railroad was a great issue of the day, but the rugged Wind River country north of South Pass was obviously not a prime candidate. Wagon roads could be located in more mountainous settings. So it was suggested, for example, that "a very excellent mail route — probably the best in that region of the country, permitting a short connecting line with Oregon and Washington, through Salmon River valley, avoiding the Snow mountains — can be obtained north of the

Wind River ranges to the great valley of the Snake, by a pass which is travelled in the winter by the Indians and mountaineers."³⁰

²⁸ Osborne Russell, *Journal of a Trapper* (Portland 1955), 20-25. Surprisingly, no detailed analysis of the Russell route has been found. See DeLorme Mapping, Maps 48, 49. Russell's party had been instructed to go due north from Fish Creek, but the leader "said the directions must be wrong as he could discover no passage through the mountains to the North," Russell, 20; this was the difficulty encountered later on by Bridger and Reynolds. Bridger, incidentally, was not a member of the Gale group as is evident both from his presence on the Green River in August and Russell's reference on Sept. 9 to "Mr Bridgers party." *Op.cit.* 30; J. Cecil Alter, *Jim Bridger* (Lincoln: Bison Book ed. 1962), 152.

²⁹ Russell, *op.cit.*, 91. Among those accompanying Russell may have been Robert Newell, whose journal noted that he had gone "up Wind River in to Jacksons Hole." Dorothy O. Johansen (ed.), *Robert Newell's Memoranda* (Portland, 1959), 37. A few other records, though vague or unreliable, may be noted: Victor, *op.cit.* 89 ("Jackson also arrived [at the 1830 Popo Agie rendezvous] from the Snake country with plenty of beaver" — but possibly via South Pass); Johansen, *op.cit.* 31 ("Freab & Garvie went to the Snake Country" after the 1830 rendezvous — which Don Berry's map in *A Majority of Scoundrels* [New York 1961] shows as using Sheridan Pass); Stephen Hall Meek, *The Autobiography of a Mountain Man 1805-1889* (Pasadena 1948), 5 ("went up [the Missouri] to Three Forks, and up the lefthand fork to the head of Big Gray Bull river, a tributary of the Yellowstone; then to Green River..."); Johansen, *op.cit.* 37, after noting the presence of Bridger, has Newell travel to the 1838 rendezvous by moving from "the head of green river ... on to the head of wind river"; Victor, *op.cit.*, 233 (Bridger's brigade "up the Grovart Fork, re-crossing the mountains to Wind River" — presumably, via Union Pass, the same trip that was recorded in Newell's journal); Howard Louis Conard, *Uncle Dick Wootton* (Lincoln 1980, Bison Book ed.) 53 ("we struck the Green River [in 1838] and followed it up into Wyoming. After trapping all the smaller streams in that Territory, we followed the Big Horn River into Montana"); James B. Marsh, *Four Years in the Rockies* (New Castle, Pa. 1884), 182 ("The third day after reaching Jackson's Lake [Isaac P.] Rose and his companions reached a spur of the Wind River Mountain, which they found it necessary to ascend. The buffalo trail which they followed was so narrow they had to walk Indian file..."); William T. Hamilton, *My Sixty Years on the Plains* (New York 1905), 83-84 ("We remained two days at Bull Lake.... We next crossed the mountains to the west fork of Green River" — in 1845, no doubt via Union Pass); Hamilton, "Trapping Expedition, 1848-9", *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana, Vol. 7* (Helena 1910) 249 (from Dinwiddy Lake "over the Wind River mountains to the head waters of the Green river," logically via Union Pass). A.G. Clayton identified Togwotee, Sheridan, and Union as "the three main passes in the upper Wind River Range used by early travelers and still in use;" he mentions the 1925 discovery near Sheridan Pass of a Colt revolver, made between 1838 and 1842, that may have been left there by an anonymous traveler not long after its manufacture. "A Brief History of the Washakie National Forest and the Duties and Some Experiences of a Ranger," *Annals of Wyoming* 4 (1926), 279-280. For an overview, see Keith Alger, "The Wind-Big Horn River and the Rocky Mountain Fur Trade," *Annals of Wyoming* 55:1 (1983) 51.

³⁰ *Reports upon the Pacific Wagon Roads*, 35th Cong., 2d Sess. S.Ex.Doc. 36, Feb. 23, 1859, p.65.



Hayden expedition entering the Yellowstone area in 1871. State Parks and Cultural Resources Department, Div. of Cultural Resources.

Captain W. F. Reynolds was instructed, in this environment, to organize an expedition for the exploration of the Yellowstone River, with particular attention to be given, among other things, to "ascertaining the practicability of a route from the sources of Wind river to those of the Missouri," considering the relation of topographic features "to the construction of rail or common roads."³¹ After spending the winter of 1859-1860 on the plains, Reynolds set out for the Big Horn country and a rendezvous with other members of his party at the mouth of the Popo Agie. Reynolds' division began the ascent of the Wind River on May 24. They crossed the outlet of Bull Lake on May 26 and the forks of Wind River (confluence with the East Fork of Wind River) on May 28. Camp on May 30 was two miles above the Upper Forks (at Dunoir Creek), at an elevation recorded as 7400 feet above sea level.³²

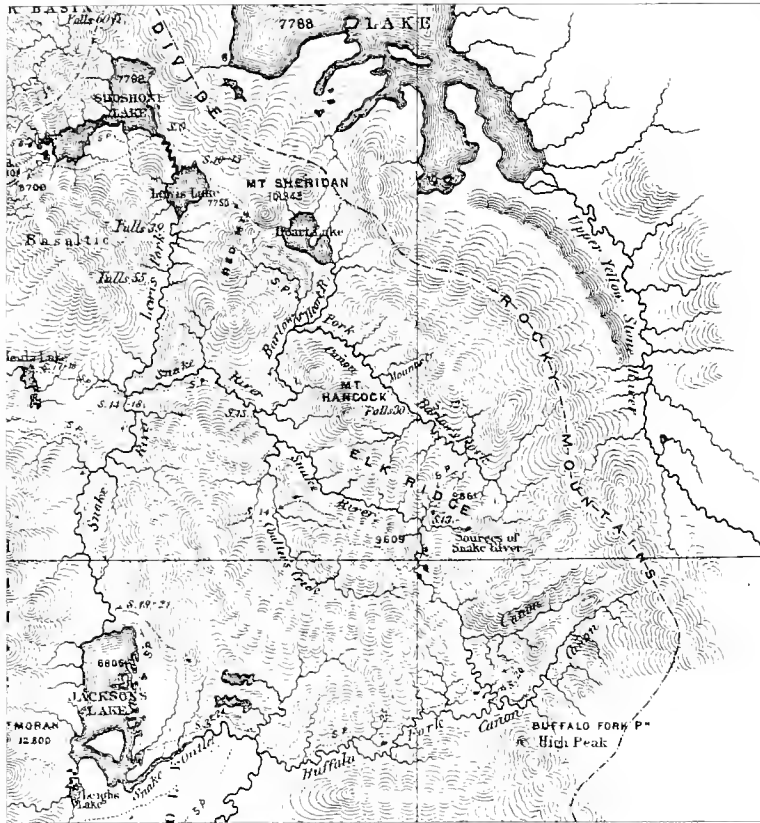
It was Reynolds' perception that one could continue up the Wind River to its head and cross over to the sources of the Yellowstone, but his guide Jim Bridger advised that "it would be necessary to pass over to the head-waters of the Columbia, and back again to the Yellowstone" — presumably by way of Two Ocean Pass. To remain on the Atlantic slope seemed impossible, as "directly across our route lies a basaltic ridge, rising not less than 5,000 feet above us, its walls apparently vertical with no visible pass. [As Bridger remarked] 'A bird can't fly over that without taking a supply of grub along.'"³³

Having decided to go over to the basin of the Snake, the party turned west and crossed the Continental Divide, at Union Pass, on May 31. The explorers proceeded down the South Fork of Fish Creek and then, as indicated on the published map as well as the text for June 4 and 5, they cut over some ridges to the North Fork of Fish Creek. The next day Bridger and Reynolds explored a westerly fork which apparently headed in a low pass that looked promising and were disappointed to find a south-flowing stream on the far side. They

³¹ Bvt. Brig. Gen. W.F. Reynolds, *Report on the Exploration of the Yellowstone River*, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess. [erroneously headed "1st Session"], S.Ex.Doc. 77, July 17, 1868, p.4.

³² *Ibid.*, 83-87. "Exploration in Northwest Wyoming," *Wind River Mountaineer* 7:2 (April-June 1991), 30 describes the routes of both Reynolds and Capt. Jones (discussed below), but lacks details on the Pacific side of the Divide.

³³ *Ibid.*, 86. The Breccia Cliffs and Pinnacle Buttes do present a forbidding appearance. The elevation difference is about 4000 feet. Saylor, *op cit.* 98, offers the dubious suggestion that Bridger had forgotten about the existence of Two Ocean Pass. However, as Frank Calkins observes, *Jackson Hole* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 80, it is hard to believe that a man of Bridger's abilities would forget such critical information despite his absence from the area for two decades. Calkins primarily attributes Bridger's failure to lead the expedition from Jackson Hole across Two Ocean Pass to a concern about high waters on the upper reaches of the Yellowstone River; but the strain between Reynolds and Bridger (reflected in critical remarks about the guide's errors) may have played a part as well. Reynolds' difficult personality is well sketched in Mike Foster, *Strange Genius: The Life of Ferdinand Vandeveer Hayden* (Niwtot: Roberts Rinehart 1994), 83-87.



Map of the sources of Snake River, from the 1872 Hayden survey report. Jackson Lake, as shown here (before the dam raised the water level), might not have been observed by Colter as he followed "Fall River." Heart Lake had perhaps one-third of the surface area of Jackson Lake—large enough to merit its listing on Clark's manuscript map as "Lake Biddle."

returned to the valley and ascended the main stream further to the eastward. In another mile, they came to a point where for three-quarters of a mile above, the valley was comparatively wide. The place lacked "the slightest appearance of ever having been crossed by man or beast," but Bridger at once seemed to recognize the locality, saying "This is the pass."

According to Raynolds, who returned to the pass the next day with Ferdinand Hayden and a few others, they "scaled the last ascent and stood again upon the dividing crest of the Rocky mountains." At first blush, the pass on the Continental Divide, several miles north of Union Pass, would seem likely to be Sheridan Pass. But this cannot be. For one thing, the actual distance between the valley and the crest would be much more than the reported $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Moreover, Raynolds' published map depicts the party's route as headed due north to the "pass," with the tributary (Squaw Creek) up to Sheridan Pass clearly shown as a side stream. In actuality, Raynolds was not on the Continental Divide at all, but rather at the crest of a ridge overlooking Squaw

Basin from the head of Hereford Creek. Hayden had it right: he recorded that "we passed up a ravine to-day which runs north and south, and is close to the divide which overlooks Snake river."³⁴ Raynolds could see no prospect of continuing northward into Yellowstone and reluctantly took his party down Fish Creek and the Gros Ventre River to Jackson Hole.³⁵

³⁴ F.V. Hayden, *Geological Report of the Exploration of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers ... 1859-60* (Washington: Government Printing Office 1869), 87.

³⁵ The analysis in the text is based upon (1) Raynolds, *op. cit.* 87-93, (2) William F. Raynolds Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, Box 1, Folders 2 and 3, (3) National Archives, Record Group 77, Entry 161 [Box 82, 11-2-13, Meteorological Observations, 1860, Deer Creek to Fort Pierre]; Box 37, 3-1-14, Barometrical Observations; Box 37, 3-1-14, Observations with Astronomical Transit; Box 77, 11-1, Table of Altitudes from Barometrical Observations], and (4) U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic maps (*Fish Creek Park, Mosquito Lake, Sheridan Pass, Burnt Mountain, Tripod Peak, Lava Mountain*). On May 31, the

expedition went over the top of the first ridge (8675 feet) at 2.75 miles, down to a valley at 4.0 miles (surely Warm Spring Creek, at 8508 feet), to the main dividing ridge and pass at 8.96 (9988 feet). Raynolds was in the vicinity of Union Pass, as he records Union Peak — "a bold conical peak" some 10 miles to the left. Union Pass is at an elevation of only about 9200 feet, surprisingly lower than the barometric observation. Yet the map accompanying the Raynolds report leaves little doubt that this was the place of passage. [The report, it may be noted, names both Union Pass and Union Peak. *Report*, 88. The 1866 diary of A.B. ("Bart") Henderson documents the "distinct trail" that crosses Union Pass on the way to the Snake and Green Rivers. *Journal of the Yellowstone Expedition of 1866* under Capt. Jeff Standifer, Beinecke Library, Yale University, entry for Oct. 3, 1866.] On June 1, a mile from their campsite in Fish Creek Park (reported elevation 9263.5, actual about 8680), the party soon crossed a rivulet (Strawberry Creek) and continued another six miles down the South Fork of Fish Creek to a camp roughly opposite Little Devils Basin Creek (8770.1/8060). On June 2, they went only 3.6 miles, crossing the South Fork and camping at the mouth of Buck Creek (8291.7/7900). Resuming travel on Monday, June 4, they had difficult going over a ridge to the head of Hackamore Creek before camping (after 7.87 miles) in Purdy Basin (8232.4/8040). The route on June 5, at 2.5 miles, crossed the ridge (8535.3/8380) north of Harness Gulch, and descended to the northwest branch of Gros Ventre Fork (North Fork of Fish Creek) in another 1.2 miles. This was near the confluence with Packsaddle Creek (8058.3/7860). The party ascended the North Fork and lower Beauty Park Creek before backtracking and camping at the confluence of those two streams (8463.4/8227). This conforms precisely to the recorded astronomical measurement of $43^{\circ} 40' N$. The exploration of June 6 ascended to Beauty Park, from which Bridger first led the way northwest to the ridge north of Tripod Creek that overlooks Spruce Creek and the basin of Cottonwood

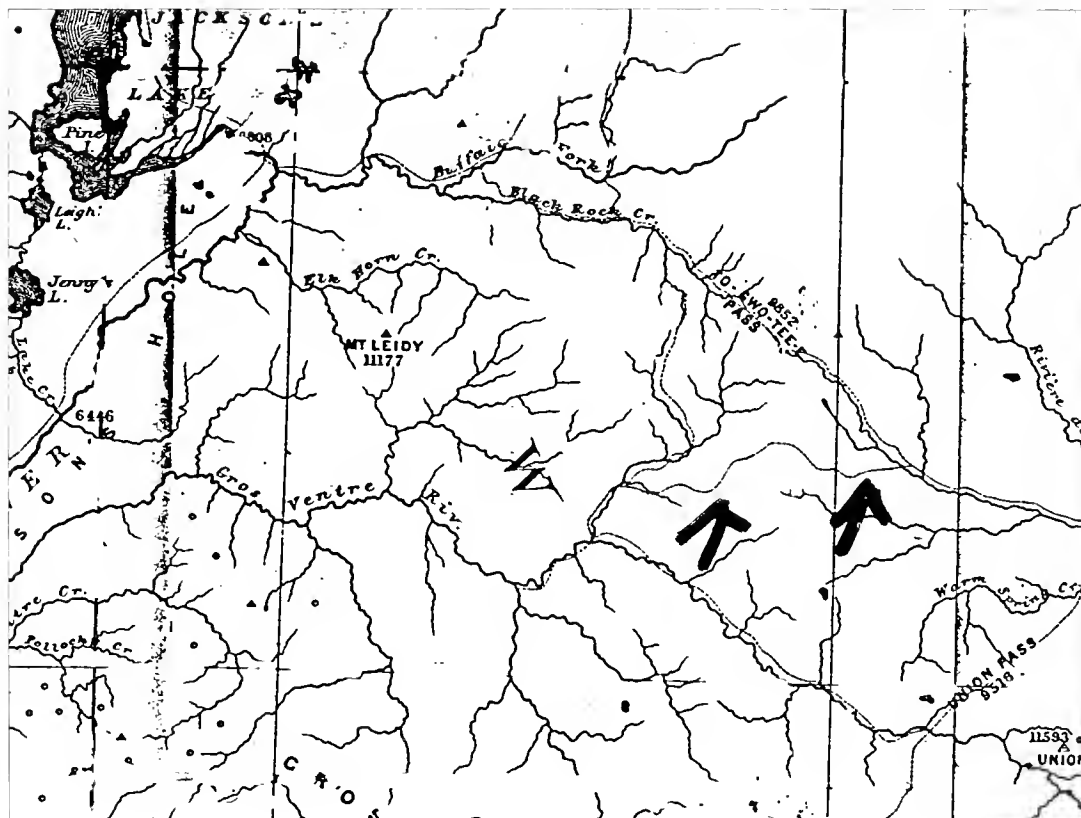
Dr. Hayden was destined to return to northwest Wyoming, as head of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories. But as wide-ranging as the Survey's explorations were, the region of present interest was not carefully examined. As noted in one of its annual reports, "our knowledge of the geological structure of the eastern portion of the Gros Ventre Range is derived from the observations of Dr. Hayden, in 1860."³⁶

This deficiency was addressed to an extent in 1873 when Capt. William A. Jones of the Corps of Engineers was directed to "make a reconnaissance of the country within the territory about the headwaters of the Snake, Green, Big Horn, Grey Bull, Clark's Fork, and Yellowstone Rivers." His extensive travels led to the documentation of a route from Two Ocean Pass (south of Yellowstone Park) to the Wind River valley by way of Togwotee Pass. But farther south, he reported, "there is a pass across to the head of Green River, near Union Peak, and another across to the Gros Ventres Fork of Snake River." The latter, of course, goes over Sheridan Pass. He describes an "important Indian trail" traversing the region there. The detail he provides indicates considerable familiarity even though the source of his information is obscure. The route goes "up Wind River Valley nearly to its head and across the divide to the Gros Ventre Fork of Snake River.

Creek. After returning to Beauty Park, he then headed up Hereford Creek to its head. From this vantage point he could recognize the valley of Blackrock Creek that, he knew, would take him down to Jackson Hole and Pacific Creek. The party on June 8 proceeded down Fish Creek, passing Deer Creek after 10 miles (7661.2/7630) and camping near the confluence with Trail Creek, which was recognized as an Indian trail from Green River (7605.9/7540). A route very similar to Reynolds' between Fish Creek Park and the pass at the head of Hereford Creek is described in James R. Wolf, *Guide to the Continental Divide Trail, Vol. 3: Wyoming* (Washington 1980), 65-78. (This route also shows up on the 1878 Hayden map, as described in note 36.)

³⁶ F. V. Hayden, *Eleventh Annual Report of the United States Geological and Geographical Survey of the Territories Embracing Idaho and Wyoming, Being a Report of Progress of the Exploration for the Year 1877*, Washington 1879, 453-460, 473, 477 ("at no point did opportunity offer to penetrate this interesting region"). Other mentions occur in *Fifth Annual Report of Progress* (Washington 1872), p. 134 (in which Hayden's understanding — reflecting his experience with Reynolds — that the nearly vertical wall from 1,500 to 2,000 feet high at the head of the Wind River has never been scaled by white man or Indian) and *Twelfth Annual Report ... for the Year 1878* (Washington 1883), 235-236 (noting that "it were doubtless possible to acquire [more complete data] by more extended examinations in this divide region than it was possible to make during the past season," yet reporting briefly on Togwotee Pass, the Wind River valley, and the lower portions of the trail to Union Pass). The latter report includes a "Drainage Map Showing Portions of Wyoming, Idaho and Utah," at 269, with Togwotee Pass and Union Pass each properly labeled; of special interest is the depiction of trails not only through those passes but over Sheridan Pass (not identified by name) as well. Since Hayden's accounts (including the separately

"Drainage Map Showing Portions of Wyoming, Idaho and Utah," with Togwotee Pass and Union Pass each properly labeled. Of special interest is the depiction of trails, not only through those passes, but over Sheridan Pass (not identified by name) as well. From F. V. Hayden, *Twelfth Annual Report ... for the Year 1878* (Washington 1883), p. 269. The arrows (added by the author) point to the Sheridan Trail.



Here it forks, sending one branch down the stream as far as Jackson's Hole [and the other] leaves the Gros Ventres near its head, and, bending to the south, crosses a low pass [over Piñon Ridge] to the headwaters of Green River."³⁷

General Sheridan was not the first white American to set foot at Sheridan Pass. John Colter may deserve that honor. The trappers of the following decades sought out beaver throughout the mountains, so we would expect them to have visited Sheridan Pass on occasion. One of their number, Osborne Russell, certainly did. And Capt. Jones clearly knew of the pass even if he had not visited it.

The fact remains, however, that Sheridan was the first to draw attention to the excellence of this mountain passage. And he did so in a quite spectacular fashion, leading Chester A. Arthur, the President of the United States, over the Continental Divide in an epic trip from Lander to Yellowstone National Park in 1883. Their path between the Wind River and the Gros Ventre River remains the Sheridan Trail and is so marked on topographic maps of the area. As the President observed as he viewed the Tetons from the Continental Divide, "Never in my life have I seen anything so sublime" — words that beckon the visitor even today.³⁸

published preliminary reports of field work in 1877 and 1878) do not mention the middle route, its presence on the map suggests either that the route was in fact well known or that information was provided by Sheridan prior to the map's publication. Some contemporaneous evidence suggests the latter. William A. Baillie-Grohman, describing his 1880 sporting venture to Union Pass and other places in the Wind Rivers observes that the area under review here has two passes — Togwotee and Two Ocean, which are labeled on his 1882 "Map of a Portion of the Rocky Mountains Based on the latest U.S. Government Survey." *Camps in the Rockies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, New Edition, 1884), 398. There is no indication of Sheridan Pass or any trail between the two passes identified by the author. Maj. Julius W. Mason led an 1881 expedition that explored a potential wagon road from the Wind River valley to Yellowstone National Park, in the course of which his party claimed to have examined all the branches of the Wind River "to their very sources" before crossing the Continental Divide at Togwotee Pass, but there is no indication that a trail to Sheridan Pass was noticed. John W. Hoyt, Governor of Wyoming, in *Report of the Secretary of the Interior*, 47th Cong. 1st Sess., House Exec. Doc. 1, pt. 5, 1074-1077. The more likely explanation for the depiction of a trail over Sheridan Pass, however, is Capt. Jones account, published in 1875, as described in the text.

³⁷ William A. Jones, *Report Upon the Reconnaissance of Northwestern Wyoming Including Yellowstone National Park Made in the Summer of 1873* (Washington 1875). The orders to Jones are at p. 5. The discovery of Togwotee Pass is recorded at 40-43, with the route marked on map sheets 43-45. The references to Sheridan Pass are at 47 and 54-55. The text also describes Union Pass ("from the Wind River Valley across the Wind River Mountains, above Union Peak, to the headwaters of Green River") and Togwotee Pass — the latter identified by the name assigned by Jones — as having "important Indian trails." Togwotee Pass has generally been understood to be named after "the one Indian in the party who knows the country," (p.40), but Jones says only that he selected an "easy Indian name" without further explanation. There may be contemporary references to Togwotee as an individual, but another possibility is that the name is properly "Tukwatika," referring to a band of Shoshone Indians. George A. Eldridge, "A Geological Reconnaissance in Northwest Wyoming," *Bulletin of the United States Geological Survey No. 119* (Washington 1894), 14.

³⁸ Jack Ellis Haynes, "The Expedition of President Chester A. Arthur to Yellowstone National Park in 1883," *Annals of Wyoming* 14 (1942), 31; Thomas C. Reeves, "President Arthur in Yellowstone National Park," *Montana the Magazine of Western History* (19:3) Summer 1969, 18; William O. Owen, "The First Ascent of the Grand Teton With a Little of Its History," *Annals of Wyoming* 10 (1938) 87 (with the author concurring that no view of the Tetons "is more startling and awe inspiring than the view one gets from a point where the Sheridan Trail crosses the Continental Divide"). A bit of doggerel, *The Rajah, or the Great Sporting Excursion of 1883*, by the pseudonymous Unc Dunkam, examined at the New York Public Library, provides no helpful geographical detail.

The author is the founder and director of the Continental Divide Trail Society, which since 1978, has worked actively for the wise development and management of the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. Besides writing hiking guidebooks for the Trail, he has been studying the exploration history of the Continental Divide. Two of his essays on Benjamin Bonneville and John C. Fremont have appeared in Annals. Prior to his retirement, he was a senior attorney with the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

Climbing the Grand: Another View

Congratulations on the tremendous opinion piece by Dr. Righter! It nails the historic preservation issue and call to action down in no uncertain terms. Mark Harvey's article on the First Ascent of the Grand Teton is equally noteworthy and quite insightful. However, some clarification may aid a deeper understanding of this complex issue.

Despite earlier statements, both Spalding and Jackson are on record supporting Stevenson and Langford's success. The unpublished diary of Sidford Hamp corroborates the summit claim since, with Stevenson and Langford out of sight above him at a point near the Upper Saddle, no significant obstacle could have kept them from the summit. The Belly Roll and Crawl are no obstacles. "Stevenson's Peril" is the base of the Double Chimney and the Owen Chimney and Sargent Chimney are accounted for as the 70-degree slope above which the angle lessened to "more tedious than difficult." The "ice sheet" need not be anything so large as to have been visible in William Henry Jackson's 31 July 1872 photograph from Table Mountain. This is not Bueler's Snow Bridge! Snow and ice as found in both chimneys on many days are easily exaggerated into a "shelving expanse of ice" with fragile fastenings. There is simply no place en route to the West Spur for a 70-degree body of snow or ice which one need cross. Likewise, uphill from the Needle there is no place so exposed as "Stevenson's Peril" until one passes the Crawl. Remember that no one has ever accused Langford of not exaggerating! The twelve-inch icicles in his original version is a fine example. If he and Stevenson had only gone over to the West Spur, Hamp and Spencer would have seen them from any point uphill from the Needle. Also, five hours descent from the West Spur to the Lower Saddle is too long to be realistic. But from the top and including a good break at the Enclosure, five hours from 3 p.m. to sunset (pre-daylight savings) makes much more sense, even with a snow-spooked Hamp.

It is a simplification to discount the aneroid reading as "very unreliable." The reason you can't trust an altimeter in your hand is air pressure changes during your climb. If you back up your summit reading with a fixed known-elevation control and adjust for the day's barometric fluctuation your reading WILL match the top, plus or minus a few feet. Stevenson's aneroid reading is compelling evidence that they did, indeed, [reach the] summit for their reading of 13,400 was only corrected to 13,762 after the record from Fort Hall was taken into account. Suppose they were faking the reading. Could you stand on the west Spur 1,000 linear and 500 vertical feet from the top on a clear, cloudless day (in all versions) and:

*Guess the elevation of the top within 8 feet

*Know that the angle of terrain drops off after 175 feet, above Sargent's Chimney

*Know that the top was "bald" and "worn smooth" as in

bare of snow whereas from the Spur it appears quite broad. (One has to compensate for Victorian hyperbole here, even William Owen called the rock above the Upper Saddle to be "smooth, glassy granite," again, more exaggeration than error).

*Distinguish two lakes to the east, not just Jackson Lake which can be seen from the West Spur, but Jenny Lake as well (Leigh is mostly hidden).

On vagueness, L wasn't writing a guidebook. Even if he were, a great deal of following one's nose is necessary even with the Ortenburger/Jackson guide in your hand. Really, once you're past the shoulder stand in the Double Chimney, just work your way up. When full of ice late one September, before I knew about the Catwalk, the Owen Chimney truly was the only memorable pitch between the Upper Saddle and the top. Of course, I've never allowed myself to look down into Valhalla Canyon. On drier days, I've found three other easy lines, besides Sargent, just by trusting instinct (and avoiding waiting behind other climbers).

Even though I know of no one who has passed the high-angle ground as a "human ladder" as did DeLap, Blackburn and DePirro in 1923, I don't doubt that they did it that way. We need to avoid interpreting from our perspective of language use and climbing technique and be open to reasonable possibilities. No one denies Spalding and DeLap were able to look around the corner at first try and solve the problem. Stevenson was as capable as they of surmounting terrain Spalding described as not difficult.

To claim the summit was hidden by clouds is mostly an attempt to suggest that Stevenson and Langford were honestly mistaken. No, they made it or they lied. In Langford's letter to USGS chief topographer Henry Gannett in 1897 as well as in the original journal, the day is described as cloudless. It's a pretty bold move to suggest that Hayden's deputy and Yellowstone's first superintendent/governor appointee of Montana were made of such mean material.

Examine the handwritten original versions of Langford's Scribner's account in the archives at Mammoth Hot Springs to find evidence Ortenburger thought conclusive, the words on p. 35 in the earliest draft: "[Size of summit in feet] Archeological curiosities, on top." "On" is crossed out and "near" is substituted. Seems pretty damning--except that the top is described on another page. In fact, "on top" is used numerous times in reference to points other than the summit such as at "the top" of the ice sheet! "Bottom" is used to describe the Lower Saddle as well as today's Dartmouth Basin. In fact, we don't know what was to follow the comma--an unreadable word has a line through it. Studying Langford's other works, one is familiar with his non-chronological sequencing of events as found in his 1870 expedition diary describing the Devil's Slide well after reaching camp miles upstream of it. It was a rough draft--not a different version! At the end of a day's writing,

Langford made a note of what he wanted to cover the next day. It's done all the time in manuscripts. In the margin, he even wrote "see page 35 1/2 of ms." The Enclosure being "the great wonder of our day's work," it's no surprise it's given such emphasis over the summit and talked about even as he describes the summit! But if they had only made the top of the West Spur, there is no adjoining buttress for the Enclosure to be on, "little lower" or not! All other differences are omission of detail, such as an exaggerated crevice one could fall into and await rescue, or different order of events. Do we judge him for his ridiculous mosquitoes, "American Ibex" and flowers as did Owen? (In the first draft, the flowers are clearly located "near the saddle.") "Changed his story" is too strong of language. Certainly, Langford embellished--the frozen grasshoppers, mosquito attack and comparisons to the Matterhorn were all added later. All mileage estimates were inflated, though no one disputes the ground covered up to the Enclosure. Yet remember that Owen "knew" and claimed they hadn't succeeded well before he saw the top! We may as well criticize Langford's outrageous misuse of commas from our comfortable sophistication. Come to Jackson and compare the different versions, word for word, with me! It is a mountain adventure in which we fear not the unknown.

In the words of Sierra Club's Francis Farquhar in 1928:

Mountaineering by resolution may be considered to have some merit when the resolution is in the mind of the climber, but mountaineering by resolution of a state legislature, or even of a board of county commissioners, will hardly have much prestige among historians or among those who associate with mountaineering the qualities of sportsmanship. It is the evidence which he suppresses that will ultimately deny to Owen the fame he covets. It must be presumed that those who voted upon the unconvincing resolutions did not have before them the full record as collated and reviewed by Chittenden. Nor could they have read the Spalding correspondence. There can be little doubt that the ultimate verdict of history will be that the Grand Teton was first ascended in 1872 and that the most distinguished names connected with its early climbing history are Franklin S. Spalding and Nathaniel P. Langford.

May I add James Stevenson, who quietly said what he did and left the showmanship to others?

Humbly submitted by someone who has spent a little time in Langford's shoes.

Jesse O'Connor

Teton County Board of Historic Preservation

Book Reviews

Edited by Carl Hallberg

The Postmistress of Saddlestring, Wyoming. By Edgar M. Morsman, Jr. Deephaven, Minnesota: Morsman Publications, 1998. vii + 90 pages. Paper, \$14.95.

Saddlestring, Wyoming. Yes, there is such a post office which was established in August 1937, with the first postmaster, Alfred A. Hook, taking charge in October 1937. Saddlestring, according to Mae Urbanek's *Wyoming Place Names*, is named "for saddle strings by which the cowboys tied their extra coat and mail behind the saddle."

This is a peculiar book about sidelights and highlights at the HF Bar dude ranch in Saddlestring. Started by Skipper Horton, the HF Bar ranch later became a very successful dude ranch and attracted many visitors, from regular tourist "folk" to those from the entertainment world. The HF Bar ranch emerges in the book as a place to experience different things and a place to get away from it all, regardless of where "all" was.

The first chapter, "The Early Years," attempts to set the context. It is well-written and informative about the geography of Wyoming. A person who has never visited the state can visualize Wyoming through this descriptive verbiage.

The remaining book is a compilation of stories dating from as late as 1996 about local residents (including a chapter about the postmistress of Saddlestring), ranch workers and visitors. They are mainly anecdotal, some

being more funny than others. Patches of dark humor and earthy or foul language dot the book in the author's attempt to capture the flavor of the dude ranch experience. First names are generally used, but more notable individuals receive full name and photographic recognition.

Morsman, a retired banker, gives credit to many people and sources but freely acknowledges that he has not authenticated his facts or information. One story, which should have been checked, is about daredevils parachuting onto Devils Tower and being stranded there until Ginger Gurrell rescued them. Gurrell was Horton's nephew and apparently a man of many talents. The more familiar Devils Tower rescue features George Hopkins of Rapid City, South Dakota. In October 1941, Hopkins parachuted onto the tower, sprained his ankle and was stranded there for six days and five nights. Eventually he was rescued by a team of eight alpinists. The latter and not the former was a recognized media event.

All in all, for the author, this book was a venture more in writing for fun than in writing history. *The Postmistress of Saddlestring, Wyoming* should be viewed as one man's personal experiences, collected memories and possibly oral histories, all brought together with great fondness and warmth by Mr. Morsman.

Jean Brainerd

Wyoming State Archives

Take Two and Hit to Right: Golden Days on the Semi-Pro Diamond. By Hobe Mays. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. *x + 239 pages. Illustrations, index. Paper, \$14.00.*

What a joy! This autobiographical account about baseball in southwestern Nebraska from 1948 to 1953 captures both the pleasure of the game and the transition of the sport at a very local level far from the big cities and the major leagues. It is a story of small-town American interwoven with the maturation of a young college student who possessed athletic and artistic talent. Hobe Mays who was an art major and who played championship baseball at the University of Nebraska agreed to play second base for the semi-pro McCook Cats for the summer season in 1948. In a time before television and air-conditioning when people relaxed on porch swings in the early evening and hoped for a breeze, a sign "Baseball Tonight" posted on the main street meant entertainment and something to talk about the following day. The Cats had been at the bottom of the Nebraska Independent League (NIL) and the town Baseball Board decided to hire "the kind of team that couldn't lose very often" (p. 38). Thus, Mays and his younger brother went to play for McCook, a town of about 8,000 citizens.

Semi-pro players could earn \$7 to \$20 per game, and with a day job, they were able to make a living that rivaled that of the minor leagues. Mays, for example, worked as a sports writer in McCook during the day and played at night. The NIL thus attracted "baseball bums," aging players not good enough for the majors or minors who drifted from town to town, and the "college hot dogs" like Mays who played during summer vacations. For the Cats, the problem was that they won in 1948 and started a trend for all teams to forsake cheap, lesser-skilled, local players for expensive, better-skilled imports. By 1955 salaries had inflated to \$350 per month and more for pitchers. Towns could no longer afford such extravagance, and moreover, television offered major league play in the comfort of home. The NIL, consequently, collapsed.

After playing in the league for six years, Mays discovered that the professionalism of the sport detracted from the fun of the game and that he did not care to become a "baseball bum." Instead, he developed his art talent and became an art director and teacher at Nassau Community College in New York. He illustrated the autobiography with his own excellent sketches of players, most of whom never made national headlines. The writing is anecdotal, conversational, and filled with local baseball lore. The book is a reminder that baseball as a national pastime involved not only the major league players we often read about but also players now largely forgotten. Baseball was deeply embedded not just in the large cities but also in the scattered small towns. Here is a book that peers into the heart and soul of America. It is a joy.

David G. McComb
Colorado State University

Distant Horizons: Documents from the Nineteenth-Century American West. Edited by Gary Noy. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999. *554 pages. Notes, index. Paper, \$22.00.*

Gary Noy's collection of documents presents a fascinating and instructive portrait of the 19th century American West. The book nicely takes the reader into the lives of those who created the western experience. It provides solid detail to flesh out our usually more general understanding of western history. By allowing people to tell (and to romanticize) their own stories, it also demonstrates how much myth really does contribute to reality.

As a collection of contemporary attitudes, the book necessarily presents a fairly traditional picture of the West. Noy reinforces this portrait by dividing the West along familiar lines. Following an opening chapter on the "Spirit and Myth of the West" (which Noy restricts to the myth of the cowboy), are chapters on explorers and fur traders, farming, mining, railroads, Indians, lawmen and gunfighters, soldiers, and cowboys. Noy does nod to trends in recent Western history, adding chapters on women and people of color in the west. That these two chapters are among the weakest and most disjointed in the book indicates perhaps the wisdom of sticking to the traditional when documenting the views of 19th-century Americans. Nonetheless, Noy's book as a whole provides valuable insights into those views as well as into the events they recount.

The quality of individual chapters varies, however. Some, like the chapters on farming, lawmen and outlaws, and cowboys, give a real feel for the subject in rich detail. Too many chapters, however, lack focus, in that documents do not compliment each other well, and Noy's introductions, while informative, do too little to tie them together. The reader is left with an imprecise and confused view about the subject in chapters, for example, on explorers and fur traders, women, Indians, and ethnic minorities.

Noy has included some documents that are gems, truly illuminating life in the American West: John C. Fremont's description of a buffalo hunt with Kit Carson, the letters of homesteader's wife Mary Chaffee Abell, and Billy the Kid's correspondence with Gov. Lew Wallace are but a few examples. The joy of reading such documents only increases the disappointment with too many selections that seem out of place and that contribute little to the purpose of the book. First, several documents - a resolution of the National American Women Suffrage Association, Martha White's description of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and Thomas Higginson's portrayal of black troops in the Civil War, for example - have no unique bearing on the American West. They are, in addition, as vague and bland as the better documents are detailed and exciting.

Noy has also included an unwarranted number of 20th century documents. A list of mining terms published by the Homestake Mining Company in 1976 or a description from the same year of gold recovery processes, almost all of which concerns 20th century techniques, adds little to the

understanding of the 19th-century West. Likewise, the Progressive movement changed the political atmosphere of the West in the early 20th century enough to make two documents on *Muller v. Oregon* irrelevant to the West of the pre-ceding century. In addition, Noy includes a surprising number of selections from secondary sources (including an article of his own) in his book of "documents." These lack the color and texture of the real documents and are more annoying than helpful.

Unfortunately, the weaknesses of this book are not merely minor faults. Fortunately, its strengths do outweigh them, and *Distant Horizon* can clearly enrich one's understanding of the 19th-century American West.

George Hummasti
Southwest Missouri State University

A Guide to the Indian Wars of the West. By John D. McDermott. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. xxvi + 205 pages. Illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography. Paper, \$16.95.

It is rare to call a book both scholarly and useful. Yet, John D. McDermott's *Guide to the Indian Wars of the West* meets both criteria. The book is both a traditional, solidly-researched introductory monograph on aspects of the Indians Wars and a guidebook to the major sites where Indians and whites met on the battlefield and elsewhere throughout the nineteenth century.

McDermott's *Guide* can be read expeditiously, but it is a book with strong scholarly backing. The first chapters provide the national context for the nineteenth century Indian wars. In doing so, McDermott examines war causes, the cultures involved, and how each prepared for war. McDermott eschews deep analysis in favor of short, factual passages. For example, while noting that the Sioux-Arapahoe-Cheyenne alliance developed in the last half of the nineteenth century, he does not explain why. In the next passage McDermott points out that their enemies were the Crow, Shoshone, Omaha, and Pawnee. Again, he does not mention why tribes fought one another or what the stakes really were in these intertribal confrontations. But these are mere quibbles in an otherwise valuable book.

A Guide to the Indian Wars contains interesting information and statistics, some of which will undoubtedly surprise the non-specialist audience for which it seems primarily intended. The Indian fighting army's small size and archaic organization will surprise many readers. In a particularly good discussion, McDermott assesses each side's weaponry, noting that at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, two-thirds of the Native American combatants were armed with some sort of rifle. He attempts to look at both the U.S. military and its American Indian opponents in each chapter, but McDermott seems most comfortable when he is discussing the American military and in fact devotes substantially more overage to the Army than to Indian

culture. He believes that the U.S. Army did not adapt fast or well to the harsh western environment. Whether he is discussing clothing or military tactics, McDermott is mildly critical of the American military establishment's consistent failure to understand its enemies. Often arrogant, with an inability or unwillingness to distinguish friends from foes, the American military consistently underestimated the Indians in battle, a mistake which would often prove fatal.

A Guide to the Indian Wars of the West is really two books in one, with the second section intended more for the person or family planning a Western visit or vacation. McDermott provides a well-researched guide to the historic forts, museums, and Indian heritage sites in the region. Dividing the West into six sub-regions and then by state, the author lists the sites he believes are worth visiting, with travel directions, hours of operation, whether fees are charged, and a short discussion about the historical significance of the site in question. Importantly, he also evaluates the historical integrity of the site. For example, in his discussion of Fort Laramie, Wyoming, he notes that 21 buildings and ruins remain, some have been reconstructed, and the site is significant because the visitors and inhabitants associated with the place represent "a recounting of the great names of Western history." (p. 188) McDermott seems to take an historian's special delight in sites which have been carefully preserved or are relatively unchanged. Many readers might be surprised by the large number of significant Indian War sites that are on state or private lands. He notes, for example, that the 1864 Sand Creek, Colorado Battlefield, located on private land, is undergoing archeological investigations to determine its exact location and to discover more information on the battle itself.

McDermott's *Guide* should find a receptive audience with readers embarking on or contemplating a historical tour of the West. Yet, the 100-page overview of the two societies who fought one another in more than 1,200 distinctive engagements is also worth the consideration of both the specialist and non-specialist.

Steven C. Schulte
Mesa State College

African Americans on the Western Frontier. Edited by Monroe Lee Billington and Roger D. Hardaway. Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998. 275 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$24.95.

The editors argue that "African Americans were a small but vital part of the frontier experience that historians have often attributed only to European Americans." They place their volume within the academic genre of the "New Western History" since it "supports the idea of studying the American West from a multicultural perspective." While the editors acknowledge the recent increase in scholarship

concerning African American westerners, they lament the fact that "textbook authors [U.S., American West, and African Americans] have been slow to include mention of them in their works." Thus, Billington and Hardaway designed this anthology to be "a worthy supplemental textbook in college courses on western American history and on the black experience in the United States."

Considering the current debate concerning the chronology and geography of the West, it is important to establish parameters. The editors define the West as "those contiguous states whose areas are totally or in part west of the one hundredth meridian (or line of longitude)." Moreover, they delineate the frontier era as beginning in 1850, "because much of the West was first organized under provisions of the congressional Compromise of 1850," and ending in 1912 because it was the year that "the last of the western territories attained statehood." Although the content of several articles either strays east of their geographic demarcation or extends beyond their timeframe, the majority of the entries fit within their guidelines.

The editors contributed a general introduction, an approximately 500-word introduction to each individual entry and Billington wrote a piece about the Buffalo Soldiers, while Hardaway supplied a bibliographic essay. Thirteen other authors had excerpts from their books or journal articles reprinted for this anthology. The selections are uniform in length and each contains at least one exemplary photograph. Five of the selections provide panoramas about slaves, Buffalo Soldiers, cowboys, women and black newspapers in the West during the frontier era. The remaining articles furnish specific examples of a distinctive black experience somewhere in the West. Some cover topics such as being a slave among the Mormons, a female prisoner in a penitentiary, a worker in a coal mine in western Washington or a soldier in the Army at Fort Douglas, Utah. The others analyze negotiating the "color line" in Kansas, fighting for civil rights in Colorado, living in an all-black town in Oklahoma or residing in the small minority community in Helena, Montana.

While some may disagree with the choice of specific articles or topics, the entries are uniformly well written and they accomplish the editors' goals of highlighting the experiences of a "small but vital" group in western American history. The articles demonstrate that African Americans participated in a wide range of activities previously thought to be the exclusive purview of whites and that while prejudice and discrimination dominated the region during the era, their applications differed significantly according to time and place. Thus, this anthology will serve as a good supplementary text, especially if your survey follow the "old western history" model in which the history of the West ended with the closing of the frontier.

Dennis Mihelich
Creighton University

Thomas Varker Keam, Indian Trader. By Laura Graves. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. xx + 342 pages. Cloth, \$28.95.

Non-Indians who became immersed in the affairs of Native Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in some official capacity, have fared poorly in recent historical accounts. Politicians, bureaucrats, Indian superintendents and agents, missionaries, teachers, entrepreneurs, and many others have come under seemingly routine scrutiny for the perceived singular motives that drove their roughshod treatment over the American Indian. Without doubt, there has been much to criticize; yet, as Laura Graves reminds us in this fine biography, a precious gem can lie buried under a mountain of country rock, awaiting discovery. *Thomas Varker Keam, Indian Trader* delivers a balanced treatment about a controversial figure who spent the majority of his adult life grappling (in large measure, successfully) with competing interests of operating a business on the frontier and safeguarding the Navajo and Hopi people for whom he felt both an intimate connection and genuine fondness and on whom his livelihood in no small way depended.

Born in the river port city of Truro in Cornwall, England, Keam arrived in Indian Country by way of a rather circuitous route. Following a hitch in the English merchant marine during his teenage years, a three-year tour of duty in the First California Cavalry during the Civil War (in which he fought Apaches, not Confederates), and an eighteen-month enlistment in the New Mexico Volunteer Cavalry, a swelling tide of economic promise in the American Southwest convinced Keam to make his permanent home there. In 1869, he secured an appointment as an interpreter of the Fort Defiance Navajo Agency in northeastern Arizona where, in the course of his duties, he became a free-speaking admirer of the Navajos and, the author suggests, they of him. Within months, he married a member of the tribe with whom he had two sons. He continued at Fort Defiance for four years until, in a typical burst of Peace Policy pique, Presbyterian church officials who had control of the agency judged him to be in violation of Christian ethics (his marriage had been conducted according to tribal custom) and unceremoniously removed him from his post. Keam's discharge led him unwittingly to the arena of his lifework, but that failed to deter him from devoting nearly a decade vainly trying to regain entry into the Indian service as a Navajo agent, a bid dominantly based on an unswerving belief that he embodied the finest qualities required for the job, a plausible conclusion, certainly, considering his background.

Whatever misgivings the federal government harbored in terms of Keam's fitness to administer Indian policy, in the Indian trade he proved farsighted and able. As the first trader to recognize a wide demand for native culture, he revolutionized the industry with large-scale marketing of Navajo and Hopi material manufactures, a business that grew lucrative and the profits of which, Graves asserts, both

Keam and Indian artists shared. The Indian trade produced a discernable impact, elevating Keam to a position of prominence in the Southwest, a status he turned to personal as well as Navajo and Hopi advantage. Most notably, his influence helped prevent introduction on Hopi lands of the potentially disastrous Dawes Allotment Act. But that only scratched the surface. He fostered close friendships with important Indian rights leaders. He regularly travelled to Washington to meet with top government officials, even presidents, on behalf of Indians. He positioned himself and his trading posts as intersections between leading anthropologists and the people they came to study. He contributed to the Navajos doubling the land-area of their reservation. He assisted in forcing the federal government to build a school at Keams Canyon. He intervened to avert an outbreak of hostilities after the Hopis declared war on the United States Army.

Ironically, it was the perceived conflict of interests tied to his stature among and loyalty to the Navajos and Hopis that probably rendered him unemployable in the Indian service. However, to construe Keam's actions as a crusade would be wrong. He guarded his own welfare first and foremost and lent support to others as circumstances permitted. Yet, considering the doubtful response of many of his contemporaries when confronted with similar choices, Keam's record stacks up pretty well by comparison.

More histories are needed like this one that struggle to comprehend and bring to the front the complicated interactions and complex motivations that guide human behaviors and relationships. This volume adds substantial inventory to our knowledge and understanding of both a fascinating individual and an intriguing and often-overlooked aspect of Indian-white relations in the United States.

Cary C. Collins
Maple Valley, Washington

Butch Cassidy: A Biography. By Richard Patterson. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. xvi + 362 pages. *Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, \$19.95.*

Biographer Richard Patterson is a retired attorney and free lance writer who has published many elements of this text as articles as well as the *Historical Atlas of the Outlaw West*. He explains how Robert Leroy Parker, who went by the name of Butch Cassidy or another alias, created a legend "rivalled only by that of Billy the Kid." (cover) A Mormon who became a proficient thief and an obnoxious thug specialized in cattle rustling, bank robbing and train robbing plus other atrocities. Because of careful plans, he and his cronies spent little time in prison. Eventually they escaped the pursuit of Pinkertons as exiles in the highland Patagonian province of Argentina. Cassidy died with a partner either in a shootout or by a suicide pact in Bolivia to avoid the agony of Latin American justice.

A combination of anecdotes, legends, myths and legitimate records creates a profile of a life without apparent redeeming qualities through the years 1879-1908. A lively text supplies detail taken from fragmented evidence regarding the ways that Cassidy and his cronies stole and terrorized their way across Utah and Wyoming with side trips into Montana and Alberta. After a railroad robbery put Pinkertons on their trail, Cassidy and friends found their way to a ranch in Patagonia, where he grew bored with the life of gaucho. Out of carelessness he revealed his location. He and a partner stole funds to support a retreat into Chile and onto the Andean Cordillera of Peru and Bolivia, where they died. Or, did they escape and return to the United States?

Understandably, the attorney/biographer has emphasized methods of arrest and trial procedures plus some implications of the law more than inadequacies in frontier justice and its social consequences, which a professional historian might have featured as a context. Patterson has written a fairly objective story that portrays Cassidy as a cunning outlaw who has earned little if any respect in the annals of history. As an "afterthought," he quotes a professional historian who wrote that many Americans are people who "feel suckered" by life and link wish reality "to believe that an underdog is still around." (p. 284) For this reason, the name of Cassidy (like that of Elvis Presley) makes a useful advertising device. For example, recently Dinosaur National Park Superintendent Dennis Ditmanson reported that a group in search of funds to improve a secondary road on the Colorado-Utah border had promised prospective backers that the group would honor a finished highway with the label of "Butch Cassidy Lovers' Lane."

Patterson's biography elevates the memory of Butch Cassidy to one on a plane with that of Billy the Kid - except that it lacks any social context equivalent to a cattlemen's war or an ethnic conflict. Underdog fans, scholars, students and librarians of Western Americana should regard this as an essential addition to their collections. Its author merits favorable recognition for preparing an easy read that represents relentless research and remarkable objectivity.

Herbert T. Hoover
University of South Dakota

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Wyoming Picture

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"Mrs. Smith and the Wild Cat Killed near Glenrock," is the caption on this photograph from the "Coyote" Smith collection, Division of Cultural Resources, Department of Parks and Cultural Resources. Smith's photographic collection documents life around Glenrock just before and during the "oil boom" of the late 'teens. A box of the glassplate negatives made by Smith was found on a Glenrock area ranch and turned over to the State for restoration and preservation in the early 1980s.



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